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THE WIK REGION: ECONOMY, TERRITORIALITY AND TOTEMISM IN WESTERN CAPE YORK PENINSULA, NORTH QUEENSLAND.

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Abstract

The Wik peoples of Western Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland, have not been subject to any general systematic review since the pioneering work of McConnel and Thomson, conducted almost 50 years ago. Nonetheless, the Wik-Mungkana, one of the component "tribes", have achieved a prominent place in anthropological literature. The thesis aims at establishing the position of the Wik-Mungkana among the other Wik "tribes". This is attempted by a critical review of the data available on the Wik-Mungkana of the Archer River (Part I of the thesis), and the presentation of a new body of data from a previously undescribed society generally held to form part of the Wik "nation" (Part II). I refer to this society as the Kugu-Nganychara. In Part III the two societies (or sub-regions) are compared in detail. The comparison focuses on three main topics: economy and environment; territoriality and local organization; and totemism and social life.

The thesis establishes that there are no major differences in social organization and cultural life between the Wik-Mungkana of the Archer River, and the Kugu-Nganychara of the Kendall-Holroyd River system. However, it is established that McConnel's and Thomson's accounts are deficient in a number of respects. Neither reporter paid sufficient attention to observing living social situations. They concentrated on concepts and models articulated by informants rather than on social action. Thus they were unable to establish the true relations between the ideal and the actual, and, by ignoring (or failing to observe or record) certain facts, they were able to fit the Archer River data conveniently into the Kariera model put forward by Radcliffe-Brown.

Moreover, McConnel and Thomson failed to come to grips with an important division between coast and inland. The Wik themselves see this as a major dichotomy. My own research indicates that the coastal division is characterized, among other features, by a wide (but regularly disposed) variety of environments, marked seasonal variation in resources and subsistence strategies, high population density, high linguistic diversity, small estates differing markedly in size, and by low correspondence of "increase sites" and totems. By contrast, the inland division exhibits a restricted range of environments, less marked seasonal variation in resources and subsistence strategies, low population density, little linguistic diversity, large estates with less significant variations in size, and a high correspondence of "increase sites" and totems.

McConnel and Thomson choose to treat the latter situation as typically Australian, representing the coastal situation as being an aberrant case. Their reasons are unconvincing. Their claim that the Wik-Mungkana are politically (and culturally) dominant is unsubstantiated by field investigation. It appears to relate to the necessity of aligning their material with the general Kariera model. It is clear from my investigations that neither the Kariera nor the Wik-Mungkana should occupy a privileged position in the Australian literature. I argue that the task of establishing a general pattern of Australian social (and local) organization will need to elucidate principles which will account for the whole of the Wik region, not simply one of its sub-regions. I argue, too, that these principles are more likely to be based on social processes rather than on features of social organization. It is clear from my Kugu-Nganychara material that individual aspirations and other factors limit the realization of the static universe posited by local ideology.

The material presented in this thesis is based on my own research unless otherwise stipulated.

I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

JOHN RICHARD VON STURMER

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Despite the good offices of all these people, the final responsibility for any inadequacies in this thesis remains mine.

For my friends and family I hope that the finished product is worth the pain; for the Kugu-Nganychara in particular, and the people of central-western Cape York Peninsula in general, I hope it serves as an acceptable, if partial, tribute to their knowledge and to their dynamic way of life, at a moment at which both are threatened as perhaps never before.

Chapter 1 : General introduction - the Wik

The Wik peoples of western Cape York Peninsula[1] belong to a region bounded roughly by the Archer River in the north and the Edward River in the south (See Map 1: the Wik region). It extends about 100 km. inland, and about 180 km. along the coast. It covers an area of roughly 15,000 km^2. The two main physiographic features are the Archer and Kendall Rivers. A number of channels break off on the south side of the Archer River, and flow into the Gulf of Carpentaria through the Love, Kirke and Knox Rivers respectively. Similarly, a number of streams flowing into the Gulf south of the Kendall River are in fact overflow channels of the main river. They include the "Holroyd River" (as it is known locally) and "Christmas Creek". From a botanical point of view, the western margin of the dry sclerophyll forest (indicated on Map 1) marks a dichotomy between what we might call coastal and inland communities. This division coincides with an equally clear social division. The Wik at present number about 1,000 people. Since the beginning of the century they

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1. The term Wik is not applied to any social or population grouping in any Aboriginal context. I use it throughout this thesis as a shorthand label to apply to the Aboriginal population which traditionally resided in the region here specified. My usage derives from McConnel who refers to the so-called Wik tribes (1930:97). Her criterion for linking together a number of disparate groups of varying composition (her "tribes") is linguistic, viz., they all speak a number of dialects or languages which are prefixed with the term wika, meaning "language" or "speech". In linguistic circles these languages or dialects are nowadays commonly referred to as the "Wik languages". There is strong evidence presented at various points throughout this thesis, and, in particular, in Chapter 7, which will render problematic the use of linguistic labels to refer to social groups. However, in Appendix A, I review McConnel's survey of "languages" and "tribes", to indicate the broad distribution of languages and dialects (if not "tribes") within the Wik region and to revise and update her account.

have been encouraged to leave their traditional lands, and nowadays the population largely congregates at Aurukun and at Edward River. Those people who were not drawn into these former mission settlements were drawn to cattle stations such as Rokeby, Merapah, Ebagoola and Strathgordon. Many of these people or their descendants now form part of a sizable Aboriginal population living in the township of Coen. Other Wik people now live permanently at Weipa and on Palm Island, near Townsville. It should be noted that Aurukun, Edward River and Coen lie outside or close to the borders of the Wik region. In 1970 there were only a few small bands living (largely) off and in the "bush" (but linked with Aurukun); the Wik people of Edward River settlement still spent a long dry-season "holiday" in their own "countries". Since 1971 there has been a movement of people back to their traditional homelands. This movement is referred to variously as the outstation movement or the de-centralization movement. There are large outstations now at Peret (watha nhiina), 'Ti-Tree' (wanka-neynga), and near the mouth of the Kendall River (kuchanteypanha and empadha.) The population actively maintains several dialects or languages. These are principally Wik-Mungkana, Wik-Ngathara, Wik-Ngathana, Kugu-Muminh, Kugu-Uwanh, Kugu-Mu'inh and Wik-Iiyanh.

Research among the Wik:

Research among the Wik commenced in 1927 when McConnel entered the region, followed by Thomson in 1928. This initial period of activity closed when Sharp, who, in any case, was only involved marginally with the Wik, and then mainly in the south of the region, left the field in 1935.

Anthropological research began again only in 1968 when

Taylor made contact with "Munkan-side" people at Edward River Aboriginal settlement. I joined him in Edward River in the second half of 1969, and later moved to Aurukun. Since 1976 Sutton has combined anthropological and linguistic field work in the Cape Keerweer region.

In the intervening years the Wik were almost entirely neglected. Gajdusek took blood samples from children and adolescents at Aurukun and Weipa in 1956 as part of a blood group genetical survey (See Simmons, Graydon and Gajdusek 1958); and Hale carried out an important linguistic survey in 1959 (See Hale 1964; 1966). There were further brief forays into the region during the 1960's: a film team under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies to record dances at Aurukun; an ethnomusicological survey by Moyle; and a survey of "gesture languages" by Lamont West. Long-term linguistic work has been carried out by S.I.L. workers (notably Godfrey, Sayers and Kilham) since 1961, first at Coen and then at Aurukun. McKnight has made brief visits to Aurukun during the 1970's, devoting his attention basically to kinship and symbolic systems.

Relevant articles by all researchers are listed in the bibliography.

The "Wik-Mungkana tribe":

The two earliest and most important ethnographers of the region, McConnel and Thomson, adopted the practice of dividing the Wik into a number of tribes, apparently on the basis of linguistic affiliation. That is, each language (or dialect) was taken as evidence of a separate "tribe". Both researchers singled out one

of these "tribes" for special attention, assigning it the name of a prominent language, Wik-Mungkana. The name comprises two elements, wika, meaning "language, speech", and mungkana, meaning "to ingest, to take in (food, liquid, tobacco smoke) through the mouth." It could be glossed as 'The language in which the verb "to eat, swallow" is mungkana'. As we shall observe, there are difficulties in applying language (or dialect) names to social groups. As employed by McConnel and Thomson, the name Wik-Mungkana is ambiguous. They use it to refer to all people living in the inland division. From a close examination of their writings, however, it is clear that they apply it more specifically to a number of local groups (or "clans") living along the Archer River. Whatever the status of the name, the Wik-Mungkana have become a classic Australian tribe.

For example, Murdock (1967:27) includes the Wik-Mungkana ("Wikmunkan..., with special reference to the Archer River group") in his Ethnographic Atlas, one of only 9 Australian societies listed. (See also Murdock's Outline of Human Cultures (1963) where the Wik-Mungkana (Wikmunkan) are one of 21 Australian societies listed.)

Between them the two principal researchers provided a rich body of data covering a wide range of subjects: e.g., environment, seasonality, economy, material culture, territoriality, local organization, totemism, life crises, ceremonial life, mythology, kinship terminology, and the regulation of marriage. On other topics their data are more scanty, e.g.,interpersonal behaviour and intergroup relations. Other topics are ignored: e.g., conflict and its resolution, sorcery, and political life.

These gaps have not dissuaded other writers from using their

data or findings in treating a number of issues. The Wik-Mungkana figure prominently in several major debates. One concerns Australian local (and territorial) organization (Hiatt 1962, 1966, and 1968; Stanner 1965). Other debates relate to the general issues of kinship and marriage (Lévi-Strauss (1949) 1969; Homans and Schneider 1955 and 1962; Schneider 1972; Needham 1962a, 1962b, 1963a, 1965, 1966 and 1971: xl-lii; McKnight 1971; and Scheffler, in Thomson 1972: 37-52, and 1978); and to the nescience of physical paternity (Ashley-Montagu 1937, and (1937) 1974). The Wik-Mungkana appear in a general survey of Australian social organization by Radcliffe-Brown (1930); of totemic organization in north-eastern Australia by Sharp (1939, and 1943); and of totemic phenomena (Frazer 1937). Lévi-Strauss turns to the Wik-Mungkana in his attempts to disperse the "totemic illusion" ((1962) 1969); also, he refers to the classification of the environment and to personal naming among the Wik-Mungkana in The Savage Mind ((1962) 1966). Lawrence relies heavily on data from the region in his Aboriginal habitat and economy (1968). Jackes (1967, 1969) takes up the issue of joking relationships among the Wik-Mungkana. Barker (1974, 1976) uses the Wik-Mungkana as one of his case studies in his discussion of the politics of estates and (other) "ritual property"; and R.M. Berndt revives McConnel's material in his Australian Aboriginal religion (1974). Moreover, the Wik-Mungkana are strongly represented in at least two general guides to Australian Aboriginal societies (Berndt, R.M. and C.H. (1964) 1968; and Maddock 1972).[1]

Linguistic research has also focused on Wik-Mungkana.

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1. The most famous general work, Elkin's The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them (1964), is somewhat idiosyncratic. The whole of Cape York Peninsula is passed over in the text apart from a single, brief reference to the "Wikmunkan" (71). The work of McConnel and Sharp is mentioned in an Appendix, as is that of Roth (384). Thomson is ignored.

McConnel provides texts, but only in this language (1935, 1936). Moreover, she set out to present an "introductory survey of Wikmunkan phonetics and grammar" (1946: 354). The former saw the light of day in Oceania (1946); the grammar never appeared. Thomson records one or two brief texts, again in Wik-Mungkana (See, especially, Thomson 1936). Since 1961 S.I.L. researchers have worked virtually continuously within the Wik region, almost exclusively on Wik-Mungkana (Godfrey and Kerr 1964; Godfrey 1970; Sayers 1970a, 1970b, 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1977; and Kilham 1974a, 1974b, 1977). No formal descriptions of any of the other languages and dialects have been published.

Given the attention devoted to the Wik, especially the so-called Wik-Mungkana, over the past fifty years, it is perhaps surprising that there has been no attempt to integrate McConnel's and Thomson's accounts, no general re-assessment of their data or of their findings, and no effort to locate the Wik-Mungkana among the other Wik "tribes". Moreover, the lack of major anthropological field work in the region between 1935 and the late 1960s becomes even more baffling.

It is somewhat curious that McConnel and Thomson largely ignore each other's writings. On the rare occasions when they do refer to each other's work it is to raise points of difference or of contention (See McConnel 1936; and Thomson 1946). The reader might imagine that, on other matters, the two researchers are in general agreement. However, this is not the case. There are so many gaps, obscurities and points of disagreement in their published accounts that future researchers would have benefited greatly from a more public debate between the two writers. Disagreements range

from minor points such as different scientific identifications of a single food item to apparently irreconcilable statements about rules of marriage, or about personal naming. The reasons remain veiled why Thomson and McConnel chose to remain silent on such discrepancies in their data. However, there is little justification for future researchers to pass over these discrepancies without comment, or to reproduce, from one source, information which must be considered suspect given contradictory or differently-weighted information from other sources.

If this alone does not constitute sufficient reason for drawing together all their written work, there are at least two additional reasons. Firstly, both McConnel and Thomson were located within a particular moment of Australian anthropology. Fifty years later it is appropriate to cast a backward glance on the picture of an Australian society which anthropology at that time provided. Secondly, it seems illegitimate simply to use Wik-Mungkana data to illustrate a particular anthropological issue, or for comparative studies (in the fields of kinship, totemism, and so on), without assessing their position within the context of all data available. Regrettably, it is characteristic of almost all uses to which Wik-Mungkana material has been put that the sources have been treated very selectively. (Needham (1962b: 225) makes the same point.)

The one exception to the latter situation applies in the field of kinship studies. Needham set out, not altogether successfully, to review all the literature. He writes (1962b: 225): "... Although there is considerable published information on this society, there is no integrated sociological account, and it seems useful to compile one." Despite these worthy intentions he himself fails to cite

two important and readily accessible works: McConnel's Mourning ritual among the tribes of Cape York Peninsula which appeared in Oceania (1937), and Thomson's Two devices for the avoidance of first-cousin marriage among the Australian Aborigines, which appeared in Man (1955). Scheffler took on the task of preparing an unpublished manuscript by Thomson for publication (Thomson 1972). In a lengthy postscript, and among other tasks, he discusses the significance of the new material made available on the Wik-Mungkana in the light of earlier data (provided by McConnel and Thomson) and commentators (especially Needham 1962, 1963, and 1965). More recently, Scheffler (1978) again examines the Wik-Mungkana data as part of a general study of Australian kinship systems. Moreover, the long debate surrounding kinship and marriage among the Wik-Mungkana did attract some new field work, albeit in a somewhat contingent fashion. When McKnight came to Aurukun, where, he says, he encountered "the Wik-mungkan", it was as part of a more general intention to "visit other Australian societies" in order to place the Lardil of Mornington Island, whom he had been studying, "in perspective". He had no substantive issue in mind when he arrived. His decision to concentrate on "kinship and marriage" was made only after his arrival; and, in fact, he stayed for only ten days. Fortunately, he says, the mission "had copies of some of McConnel's articles" and had kept "extensive kinship and marriage records" (McKnight 1971: 145-6).

McKnight's candour is admirable. However, the mission records to which he alludes do not distinguish the Wik-Mungkana from other people (mostly Wik) residing at Aurukun, and, from what he writes, it is by no means clear that McKnight makes this crucial distinction either. It is not reassuring that in future publications McKnight (1973, 1975) does not properly rectify the situation.[1] This places

1. In his 1973 paper, McKnight does not effectively distinguish

the value of his work under a cloud. His interesting data, gathered over a number of field trips, might only be salvaged, either by establishing that it is legitimate to use the terms Wik and Wik-Mungkana interchangeably (i.e., by demonstrating that there is no significant local variation within the Wik region), or by discovering the exact sources of his data (i.e., by "locating" his informants).

McKnight's work pinpoints a general difficulty, viz., establishing the precise status of the Wik-Mungkana among the other Wik "tribes". Most commentators ignore the distinction made (and, for most purposes, obliterated) by McConnel between "two branches of the Munkan tribe", one located "on the Kendall-Holroyd and Edward Rivers" (the southern branch) and the other located "on the Archer River" (the northern branch). (McConnel 1939: 63-4; see also 1950: 437, 1950: 107). Exceptions include Elkin (1940:382, n.129), Needham (1962b: 226, 230) and Scheffler (in Thomson 1972: 51).

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1. (Cont.) between the Wik-mungkan ("who formerly inhabited much of the land between the mouths of the Archer-Watson Rivers and the Kendall River") from "a number of other Aborigines from neighbouring tribes." The important point seems to be that they all live in Aurukun (p. 195). In short, it is Aurukun which is really the locus of his study. This is a highly questionable way to proceed unless the aim is explicitly to discuss current practice at Aurukun. Yet, this does not seem to be McKnight's real intention because he does not fix his discussion of the gathering and consumption of particular food items within the general context of food consumption in Aurukun. Moreover, McKnight is guilty of a factual error in locating Aurukun within - presumably - Wik-Mungkana "tribal boundaries." The local group which has the primary claim to the site on which Aurukun is located is Wik-Ompom.

In his 1975 paper, McKnight does specify the locus of his research. He writes (p. 78):

> The Wik-mungkan formerly inhabited much of the territory between the mouths of the Archer-Watson Rivers and the middle reaches of the Holroyd River... There are two main groups of Wik-mungkan: one of these traditionally resided around the Kendall and Holroyd Rivers, while the other, to the north of them, lived in an area between the Archer-Watson (cont.)

However, these writers raise the distinction basically only as it is raised by McConnel, viz., in the context of rules of marriage. McConnel (1939: 63) alludes also to linguistic differences, the northern branch referring to the southern branch as 'Wik-ianyi, or "people who say iyani instead of iyana", who "speak faster", and have a somewhat different vocabulary' (See also McConnel 1940: 438; 1945: 353). McConnel never specifies the nature or the extent of these differences; she argues simply that both "local sub-groups" (or branches) regard themselves as constituting a single tribe (1945: 353).

McConnel never offers any lexical equivalent for tribe in Wik-Mungkana or in any of the other Wik languages, nor does she give any indication of what she understands the term to mean. Presumably, if the notion has any objective reality (for the so-

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1. (Cont.) and Kendall Rivers. Although the two groups are socially similar, yet they differ in a number of significant respects, so I would like to emphasize that when I use the term 'Wik-mungkan' I am referring to the latter.

This statement might be thought to resolve the difficulty. However, while it in no way resolves it, it creates a set of new problems:

(a) Are we now to conclude that McKnight's earlier published accounts referred to these same "Wik-mungkan" or to a different set of people, or, in fact, included them within a wider group of people, i.e., everyone living at Aurukun? This is difficult to determine especially as, for the first time, McKnight specifies that "many of the Holroyd people reside in a Government settlement at Edward River." In his earlier articles McKnight makes no reference to Edward River, and it is reasonable to infer that he had not visited the settlement. Do his present remarks mean that he has now been and worked in Edward River, or, at least, has contacted informants who normally reside at Edward River?

(b) If McKnight has not been to Edward River it is impossible to understand why he would refer to people living on the Holroyd as the "Wik-mungkan." I refer to these people as the Kugu-Nganychara. This label (or the label, Wika-Nganychara) would normally be used, among other labels, at Aurukun. Certainly no one would consider (cont.)

called Wik-Mungkana), it must refer to a sense of community held by the two putative branches, based either on a high level of social interaction, or on the culturally-recognized sharing of a number of social and cultural features which makes them both "one", or on both. Neither McConnel nor Thomson seriously sets out to demonstrate that any of these situations applies. In the lack of solid evidence to the contrary, the sense of tribal identity must be attributed not so much to speakers of Wik-Mungkana as to the researchers themselves. Now, the latter would clearly be entitled to talk of tribes and tribal organization from their own position as observers, provided that they furnished objective reasons for so doing. However, these, too, are absent from their writings. Instead, we are confronted with what appears to be a convenient blurring of insider-outsider perspectives. Furthermore, given that the status of the Wik-Mungkana as a discrete or meaningful social category must be open to question, what, then, are we to make of

1. (Cont.) using the label Wika-Mungkana which is employed as a linguistic label only. It could not possibly be used to refer to any social group on or south of the Kendall River. At Edward River it might be possible to encounter usages which would justify McKnight's own usage here.

However, two difficulties still remain.

(c) McKnight's distinction between "Wik-mungkan" residing "around the Kendall and Holroyd Rivers" and "Wik-mungkan" residing "between the Archer-Watson and Kendall Rivers" is, as it is expressed here, extremely vague. The suggestion is of overlap rather than of a sharp division.

(d) More confusingly, while McKnight purports to devote his attention to people who traditionally resided on and to the south of the Kendall River, the data he extracts from McConnel and Thomson belong, almost exclusively, to the Archer-Watson Rivers. The kin terms belong to none of the languages or dialects of the Kendall or Holroyd Rivers; and his references to winchanam (WM. winychanama) and uchanam (WM. uchanama) (pp. 93-4) are to ceremonies which have either never been enacted (unlikely) or have, at a distant point in time, been abandoned (more likely) in the Kendall-Holroyd region. In either case, the plain facts are that the ceremonies (cont.)

the relationship between the Wik-Mungkana and the other "Wik tribes", who, McConnel asks us to believe (1945: 353), "regard themselves culturally and linguistically as one people", yet speak "their own dialects"? McConnel (1945: 353-4) suggests that "Tentatively Wikmunkan may be regarded as typical of the Wik languages of the Archer, Holroyd and Edward Rivers." This amounts to a telling admission. Given the fact that Wik-Mungkana, as a language and as spoken on the Archer River - for it is undoubtedly this (speech) community to which she refers -, can only tentatively be taken as representative of all Wik languages, what compelling grounds are there for treating local groups situated on Archer River as typical of the whole Wik region in any respect? At this stage, there are none.

This thesis represents an attempt to come to grips with these issues through a detailed comparison, across a number of dimensions, of two Wik sub-groups located at opposite ends of the Wik region. It is a partial attempt in two respects: firstly, because it would be impossible, within a single study, to cover adequately the whole of the Wik region; and secondly, because it would be impossible to cover adequately all facets of social life. I shall refer to the two sub-groups as the Archer River people and the Kugu-Nganychara. With respect to the Archer River, the area to which I devote my attention is the main river upstream from its junction with the Watson River and extending inland as far as the limits of Wik-Mungkana and the beginning of the Kaanychu-speaking area. The area defined in this manner coincides with that into which Thomson and McConnel by and large directed their efforts.

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1. (Cont.) to which he refers do not form part of the living culture of the people about whom he is avowedly writing (See Chapter 10). In sum, McKnight's use of data appears to be somewhat cavalier.

Only occasional references will be made to the lower Archer River estuary, or to the Love, Kirke or Knox Rivers (which, as I have already indicated, may usefully be conceptualized as part of the larger Archer River system). From an aerial viewpoint, the Kugu-Nganychara sub-group takes in the entire Kendall-Holroyd system, apart from the headwaters.

For the Archer River area, I have deliberately restricted myself to the data actually available in McConnel's and Thomson's accounts. I should indicate that I have had some contact with people from this area, and have conducted detailed mapping work in the lower Archer and Watson Rivers. However, it seemed inadvisable to cloud a critical review of their writings with my own data. Moreover, in carrying out this critical review,I have tried to refrain from appearing as the "privileged viewer". As for the Kugu-Nganychara area, my treatment depends almost entirely on my own research.

Apart from the sub-regional foci, the thesis concentrates on particular fields of interest: environment and economy; territoriality and local organization; "totemic organization", life crises and ceremonial life; and intergroup relations and social dynamics. With the exception of the last pair of items these are all fields treated at length in the earlier ethnographic accounts. Intergroup relations and social dynamics were added to demonstrate major shortcomings in the existing sources, and as a basis for investigating the relationship between Wik ideology and actuality. I have chosen to omit the important areas of kinship and marriage from discussion, at least in their more formal aspects. These omissions do not appear to undermine, in any radical way, a largely sociological approach to Wik society. In any case, their inclusion

would have added greatly to the length of the present work. Moreover, other writers have already dealt with these issues at length (see above). While their attention has, by necessity, been drawn to the so-called Wik-Mungkana of the Archer River, and other parts of the Wik region have mostly been neglected, the results of my own investigations south of the Kendall River must be left to one side for present purposes. (It should be indicated here that Scheffler has worked with Mr. Arkwookerum, one of my major informants, on these issues. See Scheffler, in Thomson 1972: 37, passim.) Reluctantly, I have also taken the decision generally to avoid McKnight's material. The reasons for reaching this decision have been stated earlier.

The Archer River is dealt with in Part I; the Kugu-Nganychara are dealt with in Part II. The order of the discussion in Part I is paralleled in Part II. Each part is prefaced by a brief introduction (Chapters 2, 6). This introduction is followed by a chapter on the environment, resources and economic life (Chapters 2, 7); a chapter on territoriality and local organization (Chapters 3, 8); followed by a chapter devoted to what McConnel calls "totemic organization". This also includes a discussion of life crises, viz., birth, betrothal, marriage and death, and so-called initiation ceremonies (Chapters 4, 9). Each part concludes with a discussion on the actual dimensions of social life (Chapters 5, 10). In addition, a body of substantive material intended to accompany Part I and Part II is contained in Appendix B and Appendix C respectively.

Part III contains a detailed comparison of the two areas. This is followed by a re-analysis of some of the Archer River material, especially in connexion with "totemic organization", the summarized

findings of research conducted into the "use" of birds as "totems" and "increase centres" among the Kugu-Nganychara, and a discussion of their significance with respect to the division between coast and inland. This preludes a review of the differences in social organization between coast and inland, and an attempt to account for them. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the failure of McConnel and Thomson to escape models based on Wik ideology in favour of models built up from the examination of Wik social life.

My fieldwork:

My reasons for working with the Kugu-Nganychara are twofold. Firstly, they have hitherto been virtually ignored by researchers. Certainly they have not been subject to any long-term or intensive research. Secondly, they constitute a highly integrated population, close to their traditions (See Chapter 6). In reconstructing social life throughout the Wik region, I thought it sensible to start with a population for whom life in the bush was at least in part an ongoing rather than just an historical reality.

My first contact with the Wik region was in September 1969 when I went to Edward River. However, it was not until I went to Aurukun in December of the same year, after a brief visit there made overland with John Taylor, that I established any lasting contact with the Kugu-Nganychara. I left Aurukun at the end of January 1970 to take up a position at the University of Queensland. Thereafter fieldwork had to be fitted into university vacations: August 1970 (at Aurukun); the wet season, 1970-1 (Aurukun); July-August 1971 (partly on the Edward River Reserve, partly at Aurukun, and partly on a trip to Cape Keerweer); part of the wet season 1971-2 (Aurukun); and the wet season, 1972-3 (Aurukun). Key

informants also visited me for short periods in Brisbane and Canberra.

Short visits were made to Lockhart and to Edward River at various times, often in connexion with the work of the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation. Also I have had brief contacts with Wik people at Coen.

Ideally research should involve at least one long uninterrupted period in the field. This has been impossible in my own case. Moreover, although I should have wished to spend more time (indeed, all my time) in bush camps, if only to avoid the massive internecine politicking which characterises settlement life, most work was in fact conducted in Aurukun. Nevertheless, I did manage to get a good overview of the Kugu-Nganychara region (and of much of the Wik region, in general). A more severe criticism of my fieldwork would be that more of my informants - at least at that time - were living at Aurukun than at Edward River. The reasons for this imbalance were circumstantial rather than volitional. Families everywhere demand great loyalty. In Aboriginal societies it has been my experience that these loyalties cannot easily be ignored. If I have placed great demands on my informants, it is equally true that they, as my adoptive kin, have placed great demands on me. My early contacts at Edward River were essentially with people from outside the Wik region. My first strong links with Wik informants (Kugu-Nganychara) were forged at Aurukun. Once forged, these links were not easily ruptured. In any case, I doubt whether further exposure to Edward River informants would have radically altered my views of social organization in the extreme south of the Wik region. My most reliable data derive from this area.

The major languages of elicitation were English, Kugu-Mu'inh and Kugu-Uwanh (the major coastal dialects in the Kugu-Nganychara sub-region). In general, and unless specified to the contrary, Kugu-Nganychara terms are listed in Kugu-Mu'inh. Terms or phrases enclosed in inverted commas (unless the context indicates to the contrary) are common English glosses given by informants.

Orthography:

As there are probably three or more distinct languages within the Wik region it is impossible, given the present status of linguistic work, to present a standard orthography for all dialects. Most new data contained in this thesis come from the southern part of the region, from people to whom I refer collectively as the Kugu-Nganychara. Preliminary work among the Kugu-Nganychara suggests that the following phonemic segments must be recognized.

	peripheral		laminal		apical	glottal
	bilabial	velar	dental	palatal		
stop (voiced, voiceless)	p, b	k, g	t̪, d̪	č, ǰ	t, d	ʔ, ɦ
nasal	m	ŋ	n̪	ñ	n	
glide	w			y		
rhotic:						
flapped, trilled					r	
continuant					R	
lateral					l	

Vowels:	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid	e		o
low		a	

The underlying status of vowel length is still problematic. There is a possibility that voiced stops, which always follow short vowels, represent underlying voiceless stops preceded by underlying long vowels, which are phonetically shortened.

The phonemic status of the co-articulated labio-velar stops k͡p, g͡b is as yet unclear.

A practical orthography will be employed throughout the text:

Technical	Practical	Technical	Practical
p	p	m	m
b	ɓ	ŋ	ng
k	k	n̻	nh
g	g	ñ	ny
t̻	th	n	n
d̻	dh	w	w
c̻	ch	y	y
ɟ	j	r	r
t	t	R	R
d	d	l	l
ʔ	'		
h̻	h		

Vowels:

i, ii u, uu

e, ee o, oo

a, aa

Distinctive vowel length is shown by doubling.

Abbreviations:

The following abbreviations will be found in the text:

Ay	Wik-Ay.ngenych	Ng	Kugu-Nganychara
Ti	Wik-Thint	Mum	Kugu-Muminh
Om	Wik-Ompom	Mu	Kugu-Mu'inh
Pa	Wik-Paacha	Uw	Kugu-Uwanh
Nr	Wik-Ngathara	Ug	Kugu-Ugbanh
Nn	Wik-Ngathana	Ma	Kugu-Mangk
WM	Wik-Mungkana	Yi	Kugu-Yi'anh
Ep	Wik-Epa	Iy	Wik-Iiyanh
Me	Wik-Me'anha	Th	Kuuk-Thaayorre
In	Wik-Iinychnya	Yk	Kuuk-Yak
Kn	Wik-Key.ngana	Bk	(Ay-)Bakanh (Pakanh)

It should be noted that the abbreviation (WM) used for Wik-Mungkana is aberrant in that it consists of two capital letters. This is intentional. The term, Wik-Mungkana, serves as the label of a language or a group of dialects the exact status of which is as yet undetermined. It also has a second usage. Thought to constitute the predominant language of the region, it has been accepted in the literature as the cover term for all Wik tribes, so-called. The use of the capital letters is meant to keep the reader conscious of these dual usages.

Abbreviations used in connexion with kinship relationships:

♂	-	male	♀	-	female
		⚥ - male and female			
+	-	older, senior	—	-	younger, junior
F	-	father	M	-	mother
		C - child			
S	-	son	D	-	daughter
		Si - sibling			

B	-	brother	Z	-	sister
		Sp - spouse			
H	-	husband	W	-	wife

Abbreviations used in connexion with personal names:

NP - (WM) nhampa pi'ana, "big name". (Also used in the Kugu-Nganychara section for Mu. nhampa a'e, which has the same meaning). Also used to indicate whether a particular lexical item is considered to be Mu. kugu a'e, "big word." (These notions will be explained in more detail in the body of the text.)

NM - (WM) nhampa manya, "small name". (Also used for Mu. nhampa mangaya or nhampa woynyo, which has the same meaning). Also used to indicate whether a particular lexical item is considered to be Mu. kugu mangaya or kugu woynyo, "small word." (These notions will be explained in more detail in the body of the text.)

Other abbreviations are geographical in character:[1]

CYP	-	Cape York Peninsula			
A	-	Archer River	L	-	Love River
Ki	-	Kirke River	Kn	-	Knox River
K	-	Kendall River			
T	-	"Thuuk River"; thugu; "King River"; Hersey Creek.			
H	-	"Holroyd River"			

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1. Some of these abbreviations are the same used to express certain kin relationships. However, I have decided, in the interests of simplicity, not to devise special abbreviatior e.g., in the case of "Holroyd River" (H) to which I have assigned the same symbol as for husband (H), where the context will keep the meaning clear.

X - "Christmas Creek"

B - "Breakfast Creek"

ED - Edward River (in reference to country south of "Breakfast Creek")

When N or S is attached to any of the symbols referring to rivers they mean north-side and south-side respectively. The symbol U attached to any of the riverine symbols refers to the inland or upper division, i.e., to territory or estates which lie east of the ridge which divides the coastal division from the inland division.

PART I : ARCHER RIVER

Chapter 2 : Introduction : Archer River

In defining the Wik tribes, McConnel takes the Wik-Mungkan as her reference point, as we have already noted. All subsequent writers have followed the same procedure. For example, in The Social Organization of Australian Tribes, Radcliffe-Brown (1930: 245) writes of Cape York Peninsula: "On the west side of the Peninsula there is a group of tribes of which the Wik-Munkan may be taken as typical." Thomson talks of "the Wik Monkan tribe of Archer River, and ... neighbouring tribes ...", "... the Wik Monkan and allied tribes..." (1936: 374), and so on. As indicated in Chapter 1, both Thomson and McConnel record texts and list lexical items in Wik-Mungkana. However, they do not record texts in any of the other Wik languages; and apart from some incomplete (and rather inaccurate) lists of kin terms in Wik-Ngathara, Wik-Alkanha[1], Wik-Ngathana and Wik-Nganychara[2] (McConnel 1940: 357-61; Thomson 1972: 29), there are no comparative word lists in their writings.

An approach which sets up one group as "typical" or "the norm" and uses it as a yardstick against which to assess other groups, judging the degree to which they conform with or deviate from it contains obvious dangers. (See, for an example of this approach, Thomson 1972: 15, 18). When the assessment is unsystematic and cursory - which, at least from the published writings of McConnel and Thomson, we must judge it to be in their particular case -, the dangers are conspicuously great.

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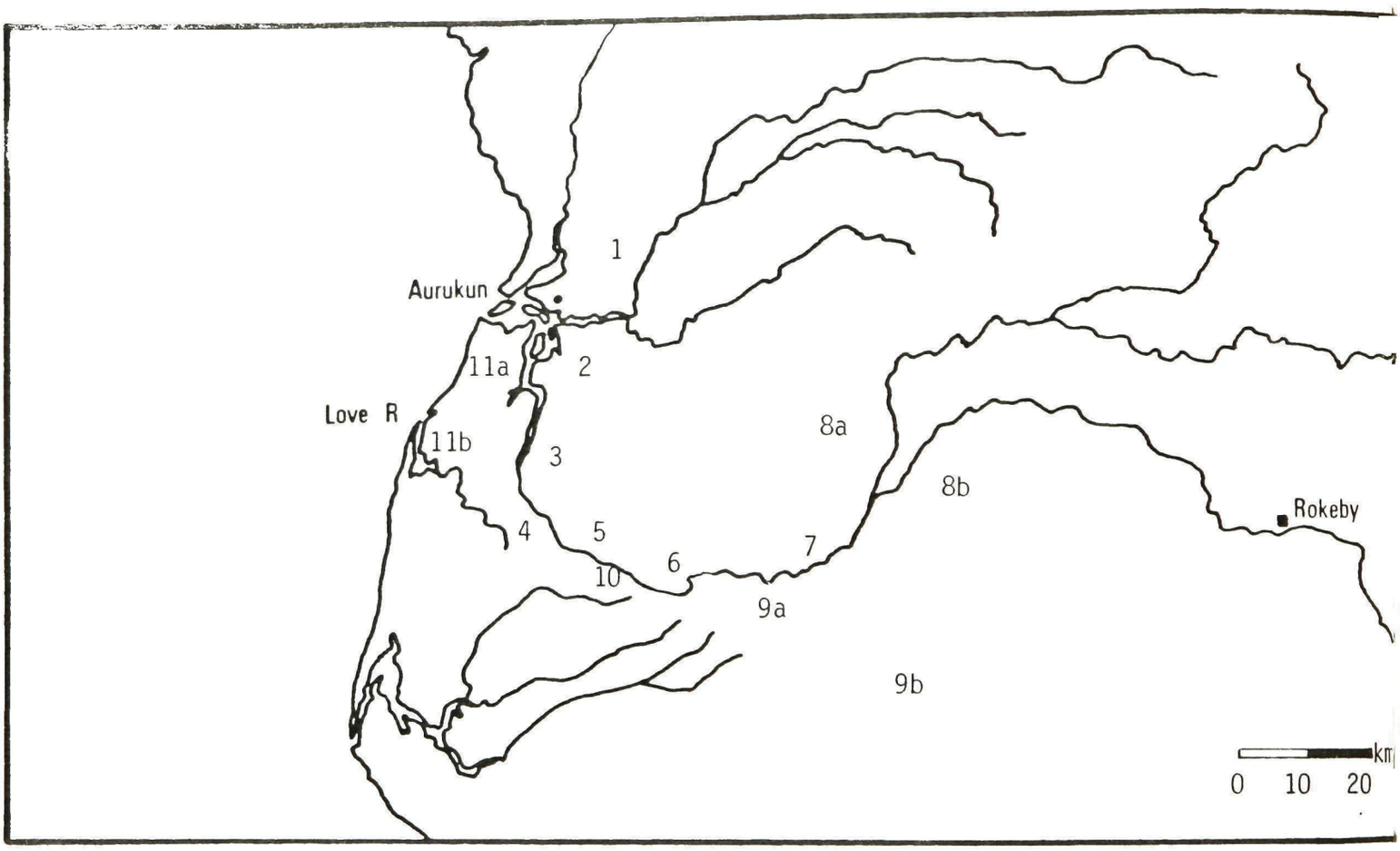
1. Thomson provides separate lists for both Wik-Ngathara (his Wik Ngatara) and Wik-Alkanha (his Wik Alkan). However, as noted in Appendix A, these names designate a single language/ dialect.

2. There is no single language which can usefully be referred to as Wik-Nganychara for this term covers a number of dialects which differ quite markedly from each other (See Chapter 7). McConnel, in listing kin terms under the rubric, Wik-nantjara, does not specify the dialect.



Map 2. The distribution of local groups on the Archer River (adapted from McConnel 1930: 191).

Methodologically it seems sound to revive the procedure which they adopted if only to establish a well-documented point of departure from which to carry out the full comparison which they signally failed to carry out. I plan to restrict my review of the literature, initially, to the Wik-Mungkana. Moreover, it must be clearly understood that when McConnel and Thomson employ this term they refer primarily to people drawn into Aurukun from the middle reaches of the Archer River (See Map 2). For this reason, I focus first on this area or sub-region. Later, having established its character in some detail I shall treat some of the other Wik-speaking groups, noting comments by McConnel, Thomson and others where they apply.

Before proceeding further, I am tempted to reflect on the reasons why McConnel and Thomson did in fact choose to confine themselves almost entirely to the Archer River region. Radcliffe-Brown, who supervised their research and who no doubt had some influence in the choice of research area, was clearly keen to obtain as complete a survey of Australian social organization as possible, and to initiate research in previously unresearched areas (See Radcliffe-Brown 1930-31). Elkin's survey work in the Kimberleys and then in South Australia (1930, 1931, 1932, 1933), and the location of the Piddingtons in the Kimberleys (1932), Warner in north-eastern Arnhem Land (1931, 1932), and Hart on Bathurst and Melville Islands (1930a,b) obviously formed part of a grand design which placed McConnel and Thomson in Cape York Peninsula, and found Radcliffe-Brown himself picking up remnants in the more settled areas, notably in Victoria and New South Wales (1929a, 1930-31). The slightly later works of Kaberry, Pink, Stanner, Sharp and Strehlow no doubt represented a continuation of the general research design.

It seems certain that Radcliffe-Brown was concerned not only with survey work, but also with in-depth studies of particular groups. A guiding principle in the choice of groups must surely have been the degree to which they maintained social integration (and, correspondingly, their relative lack of European contact) (See Radcliffe-Brown's comment (1930: 35) on the difficulties of obtaining reliable data in areas "occupied for some time by the white man...").

It is somewhat surprising, then, to find that McConnel and Thomson both worked in the lee of established missions and settlements, and concentrated on a population which had a long contact history and had largely moved out of the bush (McConnel 1930: 99). At the north of the Wik-speaking region, Aurukun had been established as a Presbyterian (or, more properly, Moravian) mission in 1904 (See Richter quoted in Roth 1905: 17-8). The Presbyterians extended their activities southwards from Mapoon to Weipa and then to Aurukun as the pearling and trochus industries based on Thursday Island looked further and further down the Gulf to recruit labour.

Inland, cattle stations had been established on branches of the Archer River at Langi (1883) and Rokeby (1884), and on the Watson River, at Merluna (c. 1888) (Jack 1921: 346). Their formation was clearly linked with the construction of the telegraph line which was pushed up the centre of the Peninsula between 1884 and 1887, and joined Thursday Island with Cooktown in the south. Manned telegraph stations (Jack reports that they were referred to as "forts" (1921: 677)) were established at Mein, Coen, Ebagoolah and Musgrave, within easy reach of the eastern margin of the Wik region. Already the discovery of gold at Coen (in 1876) had brought an

influx of European miners into the area. The Mining Warden gave an estimate of the population in Coen in 1894 as 304; it rose to 367 in 1896, but fell as miners moved out to new fields just south of the township in 1897 (Jack 1921: 466-7). In short, Aboriginal populations inland had been brought into permanent and often harsh contact with Europeans (McConnel 1930: 99).

Moreover, in its formative years, the mission at Aurukun was the centre of much fighting, as groups from up the Archer River moved into the new settlement and made contact with the northern coastal groups (i.e., the so-called Wik-Waya or Winda Winda people). Reports suggest that malaria, leprosy and syphilis were rife. Caught between the twin effects of fighting and disease, the population of the entire Archer River region had declined dramatically by the time of McConnel's arrival; and only remnants of the groups which formerly occupied the coast between Weipa and the Love River remained.

South of the Love River, life continued largely uninterrupted in the bush. Certainly contact had been made with sandalwooders and with pearling luggers along the coast. A few men were recruited to the lugger trade directly from the bush as far south as the Kendall River. And south of the Kendall, entire bands were engaged in cutting sandalwood. Payment was in food, tobacco and tomahawks. Moreover, treks were made inland to the cattle stations, to visit relations and to obtain European goods, especially tobacco. Visits were also made to the mission at Aurukun. Nevertheless, the intensity of interaction was never high; and populations remained stable in number, and socially integrated.

Given these facts, it is all the more extraordinary that

although both Thomson and McConnel travelled extensively through this southern area (See, for example, McConnel 1939: 59-60; 1957: xiii, xv; and Thomson 1931, 1934a), it is reflected little in their writings. They both used Aurukun (despite McConnel's implied protestations to the contrary) as their virtually permanent base, though apparently totally independently of each other. McConnel's camp at the Aurukun Landing is still well remembered.[1] The conclusion is virtually inescapable that they found Aurukun a more satisfactory situation for conducting research than living in bush camps. It is doubtful that they feared for their personal safety; and both were obviously more than competent "bushmen." However, neither researcher gives any real indication of solid competence in any of the languages with the possible exception of Wik-Mungkana. This would have been the lingua franca spoken at Aurukun then as it is now. After 50 or more years of European contact first on the stations and then in the mission, the Archer River people would have achieved some mastery of English. Certainly the propsect of working through English, backed perhaps with some basic knowledge of Wik-Mungkana, would have been less daunting than the task of coping with coastal and bush-based communities, in each of which the researcher could have expected to encounter a multiplicity of dialects/languages, and only a rudimentary or "broken" English. The coastal communities today still speak a multiplicity of languages even if the knowledge of English is generally much greater. (See Appendix A for an indication of linguistic diversity along the coast.) However, another difficulty, even greater in a sense than that posed

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1. On the contrary, reference is never made to Thomson's camp. Thomson is best remembered, especially by people from the Kendall River, for catching snakes and for asking informants to catch them for him in exchange for tobacco (cf. the discussion at the beginning of the next chapter).

by multiple languages/dialects, and one which may still be encountered, is the intractability of coastal social organization to the Radcliffe-Brownian "Kariera model." It is this, I suggest, coupled with real difficulties in communication, which impelled McConnel and Thomson away from the "pristine" coast to the relative security of the "disturbed" but comprehensible (both in language and in social organization) Archer River people. The coastal people simply could not be understood.

For ease of analysis my review of the accounts provided by McConnel and Thomson of the Archer River region will be divided under a number of broad headings: Environment and economic life; Territoriality and local organization; "Totemic organization" (retaining McConnel's term), Life crises and ceremonial life; and Inter-group relations and social dynamism.

Chapter 3 :

Environment and economic life : Archer River

McConnel places great stress throughout her writings on the importance of the environment, not simply in terms of economic activities, but through these to social life in general. Stating her argument in simple terms, totems are an expression of social values; in turn, social values arise directly out of material considerations - edibility (or general utility), on the one hand; danger (or general discomfort) on the other hand. Importance attaches to what is hunted or gathered; it attaches equally to what causes discomfort or danger - snakes, crocodiles, flies, leeches, and so on. Given this argument, environmental factors are crucial for they determine the relative abundances of items which may be classified into either category. Curiously, then, McConnel's account of the environment is very sketchy. It seems rather as if she has allowed the totems to tell her what is important. Her argument is, of course, borrowed directly from Radcliffe-Brown.

For example, Radcliffe-Brown ((1929) 1952: 129) writes that, as a result of his investigations among the Andaman Islanders and elsewhere, he "was led to formulate the following law: Any object or event which has important effects upon the well-being (material or spiritual) of a society, or anything which stands for or represents any such object or event, tends to become an object of the ritual attitude."[1] Clearly the "law" is subject to the

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1. He states elsewhere in the same article (p. 126):

> In a great number, and I believe probably in all, of the societies where man depends entirely or largely on the hunting of wild animals and the collection of wild plants, whether they have any form of totemism or not, the animals and plants are made objects of the ritual attitude. (cont.)

criticism just levelled at McConnel: Any object which is subject to "the ritual attitude" (Radcliffe-Brown's reworking of Durkheim's notion of the sacred; see (1929) 1952: 123) must, by implication, be important. Radcliffe-Brown, no more than McConnel, establishes the criteria for assessing "importance". Moreover, both treat the environment in an equally vague fashion (See, for example, Radcliffe-Brown 1913, 1918, 1929a).

In strong contrast, Thomson's approach to the environment is much more sophisticated, and reflects his training in the natural sciences. In this connexion, it should be noted that, while on the Peninsula, Thomson made collections of natural species, particularly avifauna and reptiles, as well as carrying out anthropological enquiries (See, for example, Thomson 1933b, 1934d, 1935a, and 1935c).

In his book, Birds of Cape York Peninsula (1935a), although it contains little direct reference to Aboriginal life, Thomson attempts to isolate the major environmental zones, and their associated flora and fauna, across the Peninsula. Furthermore, his paper entitled The Seasonal Factor in Human Culture (1939b) is probably his most detailed and coherent piece of ethnographic reporting. It is pioneering work of high calibre. One of its major strengths is the attention paid to indigenous categories, notably those related to the climate and to the physical environment. In Names and naming in the Wik Mongkan tribe (1946), he pushes this interest a stage further by examining Wik-Mungkana plant and animal taxonomies.

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1. It should also be noted that at the time of writing this article (Cont)Radcliffe-Brown apparently had access to some of McConnel's early data (see his discussion, p. 121).

Physiography:

Thomson (1935a: 12) describes the Peninsula in general terms:

> ... by far the greater part of the Peninsula ... consists of flat and undulating country interspersed with low hills and gravelly ridges, clothed with *Eucalyptus* and other more or les xerophilous flora, which becomes sparser and more intensely xerophytic on the poorer stony rises, and, in well watered hollows, tending to approximate to the rain forest type. The flats are clothed with great areas of heavy grass, the whole intersected with watercourses, which in the dry season are just sandy ravines, and in the wet are raging torrents ... By far the most characteristic feature of the interior country ... is the presence of thousands of anthills or termitaria ... which dot the savannah country for hundreds of miles.

He continues:

> On both coasts, there are more or less extensive salt pans, i.e., coast plains, subject to periodic inundation with salt water, which give rise to a series of shallow salt lagoons that gradually dry up with the onset of the dry season. On the west coast - on the Lower Mitchell, Coleman, Edward and Holroyd Rivers - where the country is flatter, more arid, and less hospitable, these salt pans are more numerous and greater in extent than on the east.

More systematically, he classifies the Peninsula into what he terms "flora-fauna association areas". In each area, he combines "the most typical plants" and "the characteristic birds" (1935a: 13). According to his classification there are five major zones: the mangrove zone; salt pans; scrubby ridges; savannah woodland and savannah forest; and tropical jungle or rain-forest. The final category does not apply to the west coast of the Peninsula, so we need consider only the first four. To summarize Thomson briefly:

1. Mangrove zone:

On the east coast, mangrove species fringe much of the coastline; however, as Thomson (1935a: 14) points out: "On the

Gulf of Carpentaria, the mangrove zone is generally limited to river estuaries and to sheltered bays..." He notes that between the rivers the coastline "is characterized by dune country with scattered specimens of the Sheoak..." Strictly speaking, this comment is not accurate for most of the coast between Albatross Bay and the Archer River estuary; however, from just north of the Archer and extending southwards, the coastline is as Thomson describes it along the length of the Wik area. He notes that as one moves inland, there is a "line of raised beaches" and that the "outer zone has been added to the old shore line by gradual deposition."

2. Salt pans:

Thomson (1935a: 14) comments:

> Coast plains inside the mangrove belt, and subject to inundation by salt water; characterized by extremely scanty and xerophilous flora...

Thomson specifies that "very few birds frequent this region...;" however, he appears to have adopted what might be called a dry season perspective. When the saltpans flood during the wet season, the marshes attract vast numbers of magpie geese, ducks, and other aquatic birds such as spoonbills and ibis.

3. Scrubby ridges:

These ridges constitute an important set of environments on the west coast of the Peninsula. Thomson (1935a: 15) writes:

> Low sandy ridges close to the sea coast, especially developed on the Gulf of Carpentaria. South of the Archer River, and extending southward at least as far as the Coleman River, these take the form of one or more raised beaches running parallel with the present day shore line. The scrub is generally low and xerophilous, and is often dense... On the Gulf of Carpentaria, these sandy and scrubby ridges are dotted with "island" areas of a modified type of jungle association.

> These may be of considerable extent, but more often they are very restricted in size, sometimes only a few square yards in area, "outliers" that persist in this semi-arid situation where neither climate nor soil appear suitable for the development of a rain-forest flora... The aborigines themselves recognize the jungle character of these "islands", which the Wik Monkan tribe of the Archer River call *ita munya* - little jungles (*ita*, a jungle or jungle association, *munya*, small).
>
> Between the raised beaches are low-lying areas consisting largely of shell-beds, heavily grassed, and supporting a belt of *Melaleuca leucadendron*, ... the trees often attaining a large size. In the wet season, this area is filled with water, and, in the dry, the natives sink wells often several feet in depth into these shell beds, where water is apparently always to be found. Indeed, these wells form the chief source of water supply of the natives who camp on the dry sandy ridges.

4. Savannah woodland and savannah forest:

Thomson (1935a: 15-16) writes:

> This is the most characteristic association on the Peninsula and comprises the greater part of the area. The dominant trees are the Bloodwoods...; the Red Ironwood...; the Nonda Plum...; the Beefwoods...; the Cockatoo Apple...; the Quinine...; the Geebung... with a sparse admixture of low shrubby plants...

Within this broad zone, Thomson distinguishes a number of sub-zones: "rivers, permanent lagoons or catchment areas"; "swamps"; "gravelly rises" and "regions of poorer, shallower soil"; and "open river flats" (16). He uses the term "savannah woodland" for those areas where the trees "are somewhat stunted, widely separated, and with an abundant development of grass". The term "savannah forest" applies to areas "where the soil is deeper and richer"; there "the trees attain a greater size, species of *Eucalyptus* predominate, [and] the country loses its park-like aspect, taking on the character of a forest..." Each sub-zone has its own distinctive flora.

Although he leaves them out of his schema, Thomson elsewhere stresses the importance of gallery forest along the edges of the major rivers "... for it provides the means by which many birds and other animal forms that are generally restricted to a jungle habitat, are gradually dispersed so that they are now found in country that they do not normally inhabit." (1935a: 12). He cites important food items such as the Megapodes, the Cuscus, and the Scrub Python. The rivers to which Thomson refers must undoubtedly be the Wenlock, the Watson and the Archer. His remarks do not usefully apply to the Kendall, or to rivers further to the south.

Although Thomson's classification provides a useful introduction to the general environment, and lists with some precision the plant species and associated avifauna found in each of the zones (though mostly omitted in this summary), it suffers because he has left other life forms, notably terrestrial mammals, reptiles and fish, out of his account. Moreover, he makes no attempt to come to grips with marine environments. This means that his associational zones are of somewhat limited utility in allowing us to establish the full range of environments available to a human population for exploitation, or the full range of resources to be found in each environment.

However, it does represent a major advance over McConnel's gross distinctions between "the upper reaches of the rivers" and "the lower reaches" (1930: 101); and her slightly more refined, but still unsatisfactory, distinctions between "the lower reaches ... lined with mangrove", "the lower Archer where the mangrove gives place to forest country", "the water-lily lagoons" and so on (McConnel 1930: 189-94).

Thomson made another major contribution for, when he did turn his attention away from birds to people, he discovered that the Wik-Mungkana not only exploited their environment, but conceptualised it.

At the broadest level, Thomson (1939: 212) notes that the Wik-Mungkana have a general environmental concept, viz., ark (aak):

> ... *ark* is a camp or a place; it is used also for 'season', and is applied further to concepts of time and space, to non-material and tangible matters. *Ark*, used alone, signifies a camp or a place but it is also employed, again as a prefix, to the name given to each type of country, to each distinctive botanical or floral association - which is recognized quite as definitely by these people as by botanists and ecologists.

At a more fine-grained level, Thomson (1946: 166) comments:

> ... The natives are acutely aware of the characteristic trees, underscrub and grasses of each distinct "association area", using this term in its ecological sense. They are able to list in detail and without any hesitation, the characteristic trees in each, and also to record the string *(koi)*, resin, grasses *(wäkk)*, and other products used in material culture, which they obtain from each association, as well as the mammals and birds characteristic of each habitat. Indeed, so detailed and accurate is their knowledge of these areas that they note the gradual changes in marginal areas as one association merges into another and they often use distinctive names ... for each transitional area.
>
> My informants were able to relate without hesitation the changes in fauna and in food supply in each association in relation to the seasonal changes, which are also well understood by these people. (See, also, Thomson 1939b: 211).

Unfortunately, Thomson does not list terms for "each type of country" or for "each distinctive botanical or floral association", and it may be that his claims are exaggerated. However he does give examples:

ark tomp - Sandbeach proper, the tidal zone is ark wätkur;

ark tomp nintän - Open undulating sandy belt (dune country), fringing beaches;

ark pint'l - Salt pans; bar (sic), arid, coastal plains with brackish water;

ark pillitti - mangrove zone. From *pillit*, mangrove, *-itti*, many, plenty;

ark pikkaput - Savannah woodland and savannah forest; the typical "bush" of Cape York Peninsula;

ark matan - Dense forest; bigger trees, less grass, occurs sporadically in favoured areas within *ark pikkaput*;

ark ita - Tropical jungle or rain forest;

ark loi - Modified rain forest association, fringing big rivers. (Thomson 1946: 166-7; see also 1939b: 212).

It is clear from this list that Thomson devotes little time to analysing the terms themselves, or in establishing the principles of classification which underlie them. For example, *ark ita* (aak iitha) is clearly related to a plant (may iitha, Eugenia carissoides) commonly found in these "jungle" associations. Thomson's *ark pikkaput* comprises two elements: *pikka* (pika), a ridge; *putta* (puta, "bloodwood", a Eucalypt species wrongly identified by Thomson (1946: 165) as Eucalyptus papuana; possibly Eucalyptus polycarpa). Literally, then, it means a high place where bloodwood trees are growing. A ridge covered with other trees could presumably be designated by a term composed of the same prefix, pik-, attached to the name of the abundant tree. *Ark matan* (aak matana) derives from matana, a hill, rise, or mountain (cf. WM. mata- vb. climb); i.e., its primary referent is a topographic feature. The fact that tall trees grow there does not appear to have any bearing on the matter, at least, in the first instance. In short, closer

analysis might have suggested to Thomson that he was dealing with different systems of classification. It is a pity that, although he makes a provocative programmatic statement, he did not pursue the relevant issues sufficiently in the field.

The same comment can be made about his treatment of other classifiers: *mina* (minha), "animal"; *maiya* (maya), "vegetable food"; *yukk* (yuka), "tree, stick, piece of wood, any wooden object; thing"; *koi* (kuu'), "string"; *kämpän,* "dilly bags made from grass"; *wank* (waangka), "dilly bags made from string"; *wäkk* (waka), "grass"; *kek,* (keka) "spear"; *min päntj* (minha penycha), "bird"; *na'a* or *min-na'a* (minha nga'a), "fish"; and *tukk* (thuuka), "snake" (Thomson 1946: 165-6).

Climate and seasonality:

In Northern Australia it is common practice among Europeans to divide the year into the "Wet season" (the period of the N.W. Monsoon) and the "Dry season" (the period of the S.E. Trade winds). McConnel follows this simple framework; however, she does comment on the broad features of each season. The long dry season extends "from May to November"; it has "cool nights and cloudless days with a prevailing south-east wind". The upper reaches of the rivers "flow through wide sandy beds in a shallow stream". The overflow channels from the rivers, flooded during the wet season, are reduced to "chains of waterholes and lagoons covered with water lilies". By the end of the dry the small creeks and lagoons begin to dry up.

The short wet season "is ushered in by hot weather and storms in November, followed by winds and heavy rain from the north-west in December, continuing in some years into April." The rivers

are swollen by floodwaters and "overflow into subsidiary channels and lagoons." She notes: '...Boisterous seas inundate the Gulf country. The arms of the sea which penetrate inland overflow, covering the low-lying plains with water and leave behind as they recede a deposit of mud. Brackish water lies in the hollows and oozes up to form large swamps, filled with a rush locally known as "panja".' (McConnel 1930: 100-1).

Thomson (1935a: 11) writes in a similar vein. He makes one or two additional points, viz., that "practically the whole of the annual rainfall is precipitated within a comparatively few weeks" and that plant growth largely coincides with the wet season. More importantly, in his later paper, The Seasonal Factor in Human Culture (1939b), Thomson turns his attention to the Wik-Mungkana calendar. He notes that the Wik-Mungkana divide the year into four main seasons:

1. *ontjin* (onychana): begins at the end of the N.W. Monsoon, as soon as the rains cease (according to Thomson, generally about the middle of March (1939b: 214)) and extends until late July. Thomson does not give any clear indication of the defining feature which marks the end of the season.

   On the basis of what he calls "food harvest" he subdivides *ontjin* into *ontjin many,* or "little" *ontjin* and *ontjin min,* or "good" *ontjin* (manya - small, little; mina - good). Thomson (p. 214) notes that onychana manya extends from mid-March to mid-May; onychana mina extends from mid-May to the end of July. It is the vegetable harvest season par excellence.

2. *kaiyim* (kayamana): extends from the end of July into October.

Thomson refers to it as a "transitional period", and as the "height of the 'dry' season; cool at first, growing hotter towards *turrpak*" (p. 214).

3. *turrpak* (thurpaka): according to Thomson this season extends from early October through the first half of December, It is hot, the south-east winds cease to blow, and the "wind commences to blow from N.W. quarter." He also notes that the build-up of storm activity indicates the approaching wet season.

4. *karp* (kaapa): extends from about mid-December through to mid-March. Thomson sees it as equivalent to the "'Wet' or rainy season, extending over a period of 4-4½ months during which the great part of annual rainfall is precipitated."

Having established the broad range of each season and its major physical characteristics, Thomson lists the activities pursued, the type of campsites occupied, the house and shelter types employed, and the principal foods - especially the major vegetable foods - consumed during each season. This procedure is useful, if not entirely legitimate, for it allows what are in fact rather scattered and uneven data to assume the appearance of a "regular and *orderly* annual cycle of movements, "... carried out systematically, and with a rhythm parallel to, and in step with, the seasonal changes themselves" (Thomson 1939: 211).

These remarks lead directly to the question of the Wik-Mungkana economy. However, before turning to this matter, I wish first to address several criticisms to Thomson's treatment of seasonality. It echoes some of the same methodological difficulties as were

raised in his discussion of environments and habitats. They are:

(1) Although Thomson lists what he sees as characteristics of the different seasons, he does not finally enunciate clearly the principles upon which the seasonal classification is based. One consequence is that he is obliged to fall back onto a yearly calendar divided into months in order to indicate the limits of each season. In certain cases the dividing lines are clear-cut. For example, the cessation of rain could serve as a sharp signal of the end of kaapa, the "wet season". However, it becomes more problematic separating off onychana from kayamana, and so on.

(2) Thomson relies heavily on meteorological data, notably rainfall, temperature, wind direction and storm activity. However, he also notes plant growth, the availability of vegetables foods, and the presence or absence of surface water as major components of the classification. Difficult mobility, the presence of mosquitoes and the fact that the bark of Eucalyptus tetrodonta (Darwin Stringybark; known locally in English as "messmate") can be stripped easily from the trees for boat building and house construction after the first rains provide supplementary dimensions. Thomson never informs the reader which are his defining features, and which are those of his informants.

(3) By failing to exhaust the components of both the seasons and the environmental zones (in either Wik-Mungkana or Western scientific terms), and especially in failing to pursue the relationship between the components of the environment and seasonal factors, Thomson limits his capacity to understand Wik-Mungkana subsistence strategies. However, his work represents a valuable first step.

Economic life:

Thomson provides a wealth of information on economic life in his discussion of seasonality (1939b). However, it suffers from a number of deficiencies:

1. It is poorly organised. The emphasis tends to be on using aspects of economic life to illustrate the general themes - the diversity of occupations or activities, and the diversity of specialised technology in the face of seasonal factors -, rather than on seeing seasonality as one of a number of factors affecting economic life.

2. Ostensibly his discussion is devoted to the Wik-Mungkana: "The territory of the Wik Monkan Tribe, which I am selecting for the purpose of this account, extends from the upper tributaries of the Archer River in the central highlands, to the tidal reaches close to the Gulf of Carpentaria." (p. 211) However, he feels free to introduce areas as remote as the Pennefather River (in the north) (p. 212) and the Coleman River (in the south) (p. 220) into the discussion. This is compounded by a tendency to draw on data from either the west coast or the east coast of the Peninsula rather indiscriminately. His reference to "great areas covered with Blady Grass (Imperata arundacea)" (p. 213) is a good example of this practice. It would be easy to fall under the impression from what Thomson writes that these areas are found all over the Peninsula, and that the grass, growing to "a height of six or seven feet" is the same grass which impedes travel among the Wik-Mungkana by the end of the wet season (p. 214). In fact, blady grass is confined only to the east coast, e.g., the Lockhart River valley (See Webb 1977: 44).

More alarming, a crucial passage at the beginning of his article must surely be taken by the uninitiated reader to apply to the Wik-Mungkana when it in fact can only apply to the east coast:

> Within the bounds even of a single clan territory a people may spend several months of the year as nomadic hunters, in pursuit of bush game, wild honey and small mammals, and exploiting the resources of vegetable foods of which a great number are known. A few months later the same people may be found established on the sea coast in camps that have all the appearance of permanence or at least of semi-permanence, having apparently abandoned their nomadic habits. They will remain in these camps for months on end, engaged now in fishing and in the harpooning of dugong and turtle from canoes; leading, in fact, the life of a typical fishing and seafaring culture. (p. 209)

Thomson stresses that the different economies are practised by a single exploiting group within "a single clan territory". It is no doubt useful that he demonstrates so dramatically the differences in the strategies which one group may follow in the course of a year. However, for anyone with even the sketchiest knowledge of the Peninsula, it is clear (although he himself does not indicate it) that, in doing so, he has drawn from his experiences on the east coast of the Peninsula, not from the west coast. He himself states (1939b: 211) that "The people on this coast, although they do engage in fishing, are much less dependent upon the sea and its resources than are those on the Eastern seaboard." Moreover, although people on the lower Archer River possibly hunted dugong and turtle from bark canoes (though Thomson himself reports these activities explicitly only from Albatross Bay (i.e., near present-day Weipa) and the east coast (212)), the bark canoe is, as Thomson states, "essentially a river and estuarine craft, rather than a seagoing canoe." (212) In short, the Wik-Mungkana are not a seafaring people.

Even more important is the statement that such a diversity of activities could occur within a "single clan territory". The theoretical implications of this statement, if true, are enormous. The statement poses no problem if Thomson is talking only about the eastern seaboard. My own researches in that region would confirm Thomson's remarks (See, also, Chase and Sutton 1978). However, the situation he describes yet remains to be demonstrated for the Wik region.

3. As I shall indicate in more detail later, there is a marked dichotomy between "coast" and "inland" on the west coast.

Unless it can be demonstrated that inland groups had access at certain times of the year to territories occupied by the coastal groups, and vice versa, then Thomson ought properly to be talking about a different range of choices for the two regions. In short, he ought not to confuse an inland economy with a coastal economy. There is much evidence to suggest that Thomson himself was well aware of the separate economies. He writes at one point about what is clearly an inland, riverine economy (p. 216):

> ... During the hot weather the country presents a dry, desolate appearance.... As surface water becomes scarce, the nomadic movements become less insistent and the people tend gradually to concentrate in groups near permanent water. The chief food supply now consists of water lilies (*Nymphaea spp.*) of which several species are known... The Nonda Plum... is eaten in large quantities....

If doubts remain as to its location, Thomson resolves them immediately by turning his attention to the coastal economy during the same period of the year:

> In the vicinity of the coast the natives tend to concentrate on the fringe of the dry jungles that cover the raised beaches... Water at this time is obtained by sinking deep wells in the shell beds. The chief food supply is

> the tuber or corm of a rush-like plant which grows in great abundance in the brackish swamps of the coast. This becomes for several months the staple food supply of many large groups....

Two possibilities are open. Either "coastal" and "inland" populations remain in their "clan territories" and lead separate economic lives, at least for this period of the year; or people move between the two areas and participate in both economies. Thomson produces some evidence in support of both possibilities. With respect to the first, Thomson indicates differential residential and housing patterns for both "inland" and "coastal" groups at the different periods of the year (pp. 218-9); given the different resources available inland as opposed to the coast, the economies of these different residential groups must vary considerably. For example, the "big kangaroos" which "become more approachable" and may "be stalked under cover of the noise of the great winds" which precede the wet season (p. 217) are generally found only inland. With respect to the second possibility, Thomson records that during the dry season "the natives are nomadic, moving about either within their own clan territories, or in those of other clans with whom they are associated by ties of kinship or bonds of friendship." (p. 216) The suggestion is that during the wet season, people retreat to their own "clan territories". Because of environmental factors alone it can be stated confidently that coastal and inland economies must diverge significantly, if only for that period of the year.

4. Thomson stresses the fact that certain foods become available or unavailable at certain times of the year. However, there is no way that, from Thomson's data, we can assess overall seasonal shortages. Thomson (1939b: 215) tells us that, during thurpaka, "Vegetable foods (are) relatively scarce and difficult to obtain on account

of shrivelling of foliage and burning of grass." However, we are told that certain foods have been stored from kayamana; honey becomes "abundant and good", and the "tubers of ... Heliocharis sphacetata becomes (sic) most important of all vegetable foods, especially on coastal plains, where it supports large camps." We are left with the impression that food resources, although they change in character, maintain stability through each season, and thus throughout the year. Further, depending on the degree to which groups stay within their own clan territory, we must assume that each territory can support its population during each season. There is a further implication, viz., that territoriality is based on a rational allocation of resources.

5. Thomson's treatment of the division of labour, the composition of the exploiting unit, and the distribution of resources within the unit is sketchy. He writes simply:

> Most of the hunting and food collecting activities are carried out by the sexes separately; the women disperse in quest of vegetable foods, while the men carry out communal fish drives or hunting expeditions. But not infrequently a family party, consisting of a man and his wife or wives, may travel and hunt together. (p. 220)

Much of his discussion is dependent on the notions of "clan", "clan territory", and "horde" or "occupational group", and on the idea that "localised totemic clans" constitute "independent self-governing units". (p. 211) These concepts will be taken up in the next chapter, Territoriality and local organization. However, it is worth stating here that, if Thomson's notion of independent clans living in and exploiting their own clan territories is largely accurate, it is surprising that he chose to discuss seasonality (and through it, the economy) at the "tribal" rather than at the "clan" level.

Apart from the considerations which Thomson himself raises

and which modify the picture he presents, viz., that individuals may have hunting rights in territories other than that of their own clan, through kinship ties, especially with mother's clan territory, or even through ties of friendship (pp. 211, 216), there are two matters which he acknowledges in a general way, but of which he does not appear to understand the implications. I refer to exploitative techniques which might be expected to require human resources beyond the means of the normal residential group, and which might also be expected to produce a food surplus. Also related to this matter is the question of ceremonial life.

I shall not pursue the first of these issues here, for Thomson gives no indication of the size of the residential groups, nor the manpower required for wallaby drives (p. 217) or for fish poisoning (p. 220), etc. As to the question of ceremonial life, Thomson is aware of the relationship between food abundances and the performance of ceremonies. He writes of ceremonial life on the east coast of the Peninsula:

> With the first rains of the north-west monsoon season... the hordes move camp on to the open sea front outside the line of sand dunes, well above spring tide level, to escape the floods, and the mosquitoes which come in thousands. The natives may now remain stationary for several months. Food is abundant, and there is little doubt that the Okaintä (initiation) ceremonies... were formerly carried out at this season. When food is plentiful the natives are in the best of spirits. Then, and then only, have they the time and energy to devote to the exacting ceremonial of the Okaintä. Food supply is the limiting factor in most of the activities of primitive man... (Thomson 1933a: 458).

Unfortunately, Thomson does not pursue the issue systematically on the west coast. He recorded that limited food storage does occur, "... most often in connection with ceremonial activities, either for initiation, or for the ceremonial presentation of food required during mourning, and other such occasions." (Thomson

1939b: 216). One implication is that the host group provides food for the visitors. This may be possible for short-term events such as the feasting which concludes the period of mourning after a death; however, it would seem to be an impossible task in the case of long-term events, such as so-called "initiation ceremonies", though there may well be a sense in which the group who owns the site where the ceremony is held continues to act as host.

The major ceremonies imply an abundance of resources over more or less long periods. Only two sets of conditions would, if operating, support such large-scale gatherings over long periods: either a period of general abundance over the whole region, which would mean that the ceremony could be held more or less anywhere; or, a reliable seasonal abundance of a particular resource (or set of resources) accessible from a particular occupational site. In the first case, we would be dealing with ceremonies which are not site-specific. In the second case, the ceremonies would be site-specific.

In the first case, the choice of a particular site within the broader environment at a particular moment in time (remembering that all sites are hypothetically available) would be dependent on purely political factors, viz., the ascendancy or popularity of a particular clan, and its acceptability as host. In the second case, the host clan would gain great political prestige from the fact that it controlled the site at which the ceremony was always held (and the resource, or set of resources, on which, if it was not based, it at least depended).

Of course, a range of possibilities lie between the two

polar positions. For example, a ceremony may not be site-specific in a strict sense. However, it may be environment- (or resource-) specific. For example, a ceremony may be dependent on the seasonal abundance of "bulgru" or "panja" (taking up an example cited already from both Thomson and McConnel) which grows at a number of marshes located in the coastal plain. The choice of a particular marsh at a particular moment in time may revolve around the presence or absence of secondary resources, or a super-abundance of "bulgru" in a particular year, *as well as* on political or other social factors. (As examples of other social factors - though difficult to isolate from political factors - let me cite the death of a prominent individual, or the disposal of a body, or a fight at a particular location. Each of these may temporarily rule the location out of account for ceremonial (or other) purposes. (In this connexion see also Biernoff 1978: 97)).

Another possible variation might be that the ceremony itself is not bound to any single site, but moves, according to resource availabilities, from one site to another. This could involve minor shifts, for example, progressively down a beach front, or it could involve more major movements.

Thomson tells us nothing of hunting rights in the case of any ceremony. In the case of site-specific ceremonies, we must consider the possibility that food resources are obtained over a relatively wide range, extending beyond the boundaries of the territory of the host clan. In this case, two possibilities appear to be open: either people can pursue the food quest in clan territories to which they have rights (either primary or secondary) but which are accessible from the ceremonial site; or, alternatively,

the habitual restraints (as expounded by Thomson) are lifted. This raises the possibility that with ceremonies hunting and gathering activities are organized on the basis of a set of special principles.

In all fairness, it must be pointed out that Thomson makes a number of positive contributions to our understanding of economic life in the area. Firstly, he records a number of exploitative techniques adapted to seasonal requirements and resource abundances. For example, he notes:

(i) "...fish fences and traps constructed extensively in streams carrying receding floodwaters" (onychana)(1939b: 214);

(ii) "fish taken with nets in sheets of shallow water on plains" (onychana) (p. 214);

(iii) "poisoning of fish, which are now concentrated in deep permanent lagoons" (thurpaka) (p. 214);

(iv) "fish capture by spears, and nets ...Women collect shellfish in large quantities" (kaapa) (p. 214).

Secondly, he identifies many of the important food resources, and with respect to vegetable foods, he provides details of their preparation for consumption (see especially his notes to Plate XXII). He also provides a detailed account of the use of the "ant bed 'oven'" in cooking large game as well as some vegetable food (pp. 220-1). Finally, he records some of the resources used in fabricating material cultural items, as well as the items themselves.

McConnel's treatment of the economy is as sketchy as her treatment of the environment. (See for example, McConnel 1953: 6-8; her brief description does add the useful remark that "Sometimes the top of the yam is left adhering to the stem of the vine and replanted, only the lower part of the root being taken for food";

and she notes that stingray meat is "reserved for older men". Thomson does not record this "conservation" behaviour; nor does he comment on the selective allocation of food resources). However, she does devote a paper to the material culture: Native Arts and Industries on the Archer, Kendall and Holroyd Rivers, Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland (1953). The name of the article implies that she covers the whole of the Wik area. She gives no precise point of origin for the specimens collected within the region. The reader is left with the impression that there is a single repertoire of items found throughout the region, consisting of long and short fighting spears; hunting spears of various types; spearthrowers (or woomeras); bark canoes; fighting sticks; yam sticks; fire sticks; string aprons; dilly-bags; grass baskets; fish nets; wooden mallets, and so on (see especially pp. 25-35). McConnel also lists shell nose-pegs, shell pendants, ear ornaments, pipes and dugout canoes as showing obvious Papuan (and Torres Straits) influences (pp. 9, 23-5). She reports that stone axes are traded in from the south on the east (p. 24); and that shields and boomerangs are unknown throughout the region (pp. 11, 24).

Thomson also pays some attention to material culture. He reviews "bone-tipped implements" (1939b: 209-10), "implements and utensils used by women" (Plates XXI-XXII), and the shelters and platforms constructed at campsites (pp. 218-9), in connexion with his discussion of seasonality. He also devotes a short paper to smoking pipes (1939a) and another to the distribution of water-craft (1952). Like McConnel, he tends to stress Papuan influences and pays little attention to local variation within the Wik region. However, he does note that bark canoes were employed in the Archer River area but were "unknown south of the Kendall River" (1952: 2).

(Thomson's remarks are not as unambiguous as they first appear. On the map which accompanies the article, he marks the southern limit of the distribution of bark canoes slightly north of the Kendall River, rather than at the river itself. This "precision" may be considered a little unfortunate; see my comment in Chapter 12.)

Chapter 4 :

Territoriality and local organization : Archer River

Writing about social organization among the Wik-Mungkana, both McConnel and Thomson stick closely to the orthodox doctrine first formulated by their mentor, Radcliffe-Brown (1913). They follow exactly the procedure he adopted in writing about the Kariera, in working downward from the most inclusive grouping, viz., the tribe, to the least inclusive grouping, viz., the family. Both Radcliffe-Brown and McConnel stress the family as the primary social unit. (See, for example, Radcliffe-Brown 1913: 147; and McConnel 1934: 314-6, 325). Although Thomson does not specifically refer to the family as the basic social unit among the Wik-Mungkana or on the Archer River, he does note that when conditions favour mobility, large groups tend to dissolve: "Gradually the groups break up into the families, and, using canoes at first, they disperse along the rivers" (Thomson 1939b: 219).) Moreover, in a general article on Aboriginal social organization Thomson (1952: 81) explicitly asserts that " ... the *family* is the most important unit of social life." Given the general agreement of all three writers on the centrality of the family, it seems curious that they did not invert the direction of their attack, working out from the family towards more inclusive social groupings. There is no simple relation between familial structures (which are cognatic in character) and unilineal descent groups such as clans. One can easily imagine that the demands placed on any individual by his (or her) affiliation with a particular descent group might, on occasions, coincide poorly with familial interests. My reading of Radcliffe-Brown, McConnel and Thomson is that, given conflicting demands, those relating to family obligations must take priority. It is difficult otherwise

to understand in which way they mean that the family is the primary, or basic, or most important social unit. However, the impression which emerges from their combined accounts (i.e., Radcliffe-Brown writing about the Kariera and Thomson and McConnel about the Archer River) is that families are simply sub-units of clans (or of hordes[1]).

Tribe:

Although McConnel uses the concept "tribe" freely, she never defines what it means. Thomson (1935b: 462; see also 1972: 1) notes that "...in this region, as in other parts of Australia, the tribe is generally merely a linguistic unit, and is not the war making group." (In this connexion, it is worth

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1. My use of the term horde in this connexion should not be taken to indicate that I am unaware of the fact that Radcliffe-Brown did not use it in describing Kariera social organization but introduced it in a later paper (1918). However, there can be no question that Radcliffe-Brown intended it to be understood as a general structural feature of all Australian societies, including the Kariera. In a letter to American Anthropologist (1956) which represents his final utterance on Australian local organization, he notes that he introduced the concept of horde "in order to avoid certain ambiguities in the word 'clan'" (p. 365), and he articulates, clearer here than elsewhere in his writings, the relations between clan, horde and family. He writes:

> A clan is what Berndt calls a "unilineal descent group". A child belongs to the clan of its father. The clan is corporate in the sense that its adult male members can and do engage in collective action, and that as a clan they have collective ownership and control of a certain territory with its food resources and its "totem centers" with their associated rites and myths. The horde is a collection of parental families which regularly co-operate in the food quest, a parental family consisting of a man with his wife or wives and their unmarried children. The unity of the horde and its connection with a certain territory result from the fact that all the married men of a given horde are members of one particular clan. A woman belongs to her father's clan but to her husband's horde. The horde can be described as a "quasi-domestic" group.

It is notable that this statement represents a departure, to some extent from his initial formulation of the notion of horde: (cont.)

noting that Thomson questions the social reality of the "tribe" on interactional grounds:

> Where the territory occupied by a tribe was extensive, the clans at one side of the tribal territory frequently had more in common with the clans of neighbouring tribes than with those of their own tribe situated on the other side of the territory. In the Wik Monkan tribe, for example, the clans impinging on the territory of the Kandju had more in common with the neighbouring Kandju clans, with whom they came into contact almost daily, than with members of their own tribe who belonged to distant clans living on the lower Archer River. (Thomson 1972: 1; see the almost identical passage in Thomson 1935b: 462-3).)

Elsewhere (1939b: 211) he remarks: "There is no central tribal authority..." These comments echo closely Radcliffe-Brown's statement (1913: 144-5):

> The tribe is distinguished from its neighbours by the possession of a name, a language and a defined territory. There is no tribal chief, nor any form of tribal government. The fights that formerly took place were not wars of one tribe with another, but of one part of one tribe with one part of another, or at times of one part of a tribe with another part of the same tribe. Thus there was no unity of the tribe in warfare."

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1. (Cont) The horde, as it is found in the normal forms of Australian social organization, may be defined by the following characters:-

(1) It consists of a number of persons who regularly live together in one camp and share a common life.

(2) The horde is the primary land-owning group, each horde owning and occupying a certain area of country.

(3) Each horde is independent and autonomous, and manages its own affairs by means of the camp-council, often directed by one head-man.

(4) A child belongs to the horde of the father - *i.e.*, descent is strictly in the male line. A woman, on marriage, joins and lives with the horde of the husband.

(5) The horde acts as a unit in its relations with other hordes of the same or of other tribes. (1918: 222-3). (Cont.)

Clans and *hordes:*

What are the component parts to which Radcliffe-Brown refers? McConnel (1930: 181) writes that among "...The Wik-Munkan and allied tribes... the tribe consists of a number of patrilineal clans, each claiming descent from common ancestors and having hunting rights over a certain territory." She notes, further, that "The members of a clan hunt chiefly on their own grounds, to which they are deeply attached." Combining this principle with the principle of clan exogamy, she writes (1930: 181-2): "Each local horde or camp consists of members of the local clan, plus women of other clans who have married into the clan and minus the women of the clan who have left it to marry into other clans..." Each residential group then consists of members of a number of different clans.

Thomson writes in similar terms. He notes (1935b: 462; also 1972: 1) that the tribes are composed of "localized totemic clans with patrilineal descent". He stresses also the importance of hunting rights (1939b: 211): "The clan is the land-owning group; all the members of the clan have hunting rights over the territory of the clan into which they were born." It is worth noting, in this connexion, that Radcliffe-Brown (1913: 145) took birth place as a guide to the location of clan territories: 'To the question "Where is your country?" .... a native replies by naming one of the more prominent camping places of his local group, or in some

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1. (Cont) In this passage Radcliffe-Brown does not distinguish between ownership and occupancy. In the passage cited earlier, this distinction is made, at least implicitly. The clan "owns"; the horde "occupies". As originally conceived, the horde was intended to serve as a useful term covering those situations in which matrilineal clans were present - i.e, "the non-localized totemic clan with female descent" (1918: 224). In situations such as those which applied among the Kariera where the "local group" (Radcliffe-Brown's term) was also a patrilineal clan (1913: 159-60), it was possible to talk of "local clans or clan-hordes" (1918: 224).

cases the place where he was born.' In the case of the Kariera, Radcliffe-Brown sees the two types of answers as equivalent, though his informants may not. For example, it may be that an individual enjoys a particular tie with the place where he is born even if it falls outside his own clan territory. Equally Thomson, although he refers to birth place, does not produce any evidence to support what is, in fact, a tacit claim that people are born not only into their clan but also within their own clan estate (or territory). His careful definition of the clan (1939b: 211, note 1) clearly bears this implication. Men reside (and presumably their children are born) within their own clan estate:

> A clan in a patrilineal society is the group consisting of a man and all his relatives in the male line; that is, his father, his father's brothers and sisters, his own brothers and sisters, and his own sons and daughters, together with all the children of the male members of the clan only. All these men, however, marry women who are members of other clans, and their sisters and daughters also marry men of other clans and become members of these groups. So that the group of people popularly spoken of as a 'camp', that is found at any time within a clan territory, really consists of members of many clans, and for this group the term horde will be used. It is in reality an aggregation of families of the male members of the clan. (See also Thomson 1935b: 462, note 4).

However, beyond this point Thomson begins to ask questions which pose considerable difficulties for Radcliffe-Brown's model. He has already noted that the tribe is not a political unit. He follows Radcliffe-Brown in defining political units in terms of political action, viz., warfare. However, he is left with the question: What, then, are the political units? He writes (1935b: 462-463):

> The localized totemic clans... were self-governing units, and the fighting that took place intermittently, generally having its origin in blood feuds, or in expeditions organized for the purpose of capturing women, were (sic) carried out, not as a rule by the tribe, but by its component clans, or more accurately,

> by its hordes acting independently, sometimes among themselves, at others against hordes of neighbouring tribes." (See also, Thomson 1972: 8).

What is the real political unit, the clan or the horde? Thomson (1935b: 462-3) attempts to resolve the issue in the following manner:

> It is clear... that although the horde is the war-making group, the clan, and not the horde, is the land-owning group; a clan is a stable, permanent, structural unit of society; but the horde is unstable; it is a sociological entity the membership of which is constantly changing. ...Brief mention must be made of the bond that unites members of the two groups. It may be noted that solidarity within the clan is maintained by the bond furnished by (1) common descent, (2) the possession of common totems, (3) the possession of a common territory. Solidarity within the horde rests upon none of these permanent foundations; it depends solely upon the cohesive force supplied by such social institutions as marriage and the bond set up between a man and a woman (who are members of different clans) by the family, centered in their children, and by the sharing of normal activities of everyday life, by fighting with other hordes - in all of which the bond of solidarity within the horde is affirmed and strengthened by collective ceremonies such as dancing, especially war, funeral, and vengeance dances.

If Thomson's solution to the problem is to be accepted, he must argue that the clan is an actual social group whose members act cohesively. If this were so, however, he would not be obliged to call on the horde as his political unit. He could simply argue that in situations involving conflict with other groups the clan acts as the core of the political unit, and calls upon the women who have married into the group as political allies. However, with whom are the clans fighting? Presumably with other clans who would similarly be calling upon women who had married into the group to act as their allies. In conflict with hordes involving members of their own clan, do women forego their clan affiliation to support the horde in which they reside? This would be hard to believe, for we are told that women do not relinquish clan affiliation at marriage (See McConnel 1934: 333). Alternatively, do they simply withdraw from situations involving members of their own clan? In this case

it would be difficult to envisage situations in which the horde as a whole would act as a political unit. Furthermore, by maintaining neutrality a woman would imply, by her inaction, that her marital relationship (and hence her horde membership) was equally demanding of her allegiance as her clan membership. How do we escape this impasse? Only in the unlikely event that conflict arose only between groups in which there is no overlapping clan membership.

Are there, in fact, any situations in which clan members act as a group? Neither Thomson nor McConnel lists any. Moreover, it would not be difficult to envisage situations in which conflict arose between clan members. On what principles then do individuals align themselves? McConnel and Thomson ignore the question of interpersonal conflict within the clan; consequently, they fail to recognize that the ideology of patrilineal descent is only one of a number of kin-based ideologies current in Wik social life. The patrilineal ideology finds expression in the transmission of certain kinds of property. Thomson refers to land, and to common totems. He might have added to the list perhaps names, language, songs, stories, dances, body designs, and so on. Equally, however, both Thomson and McConnel (and Radcliffe-Brown) might have considered other property, including rights and duties, which relate to alternate ideologies based on different familial ties, e.g., mother-child, mother's brother-sister's son, wife's mother-daughter's husband, and so on.

The problem in Radcliffe-Brown's account (and, after him, those of McConnel and Thomson) is that he assigns locality primacy as an organizing principle over other principles. McConnel (1934: 322) is perhaps close to the reality when she writes: "The constitution

of a clan is *as if a* (her italics) local area had been originally settled by a family which had asserted its hunting rights there for itself and its children...." In short, she places social ties (familial ties) prior to local ties.

The difficulties arise, from that point, in trying to equate land ownership with continuity of occupation (i.e., residence). The estate can certainly be seen as providing an economic base. However, defining it in economic terms poses problems. Essentially, it posits a rational basis of territoriality, such that each residential group has the possibility of subsisting on its own land. (The same point has already been made during the discussion of the economy.) On the one hand, it is difficult to envisage a situation in which each estate is able to furnish all the resources required by a residential group given seasonal variability and demographic fluctuations within the group itself. On the other hand, there are alternate strategies open, viz., individuals can maintain ties with a number of other territories (and access to their resources) by establishing social ties (or falling back on social ties which already exist); or, certain local resources might be more readily exploited by drawing on a larger labour pool than is available to any single residential group. By encouraging visitors when these resources are available, the residential group can maximize sociability, as well as draw on increased manpower and thereby effectively exploit the environment.

To some extent, McConnel and Thomson are both aware of these options. They do not see clans or their estates simply as autonomous units, or closed systems. Exogamy, of course, guarantees a flow of personnel. Moreover, hunting rights are not confined exclusively

to the clan estate. Thomson (1939b: 211) writes:

> ... Members of the horde who enter the group [i.e., the clan] by marriage or adoption, never acquire ownership of the [clan] territory, but secondarily, the right to hunt over it as members of the occupational group. An individual may also be permitted, by the recognition of certain bonds of relationship, i.e., by kinship ties, to hunt in the territories of other clans, for example a man is invariably permitted to hunt in the clan territory of his mother. (My brackets.)

As previously noted, he also acknowledges "bonds of friendship" (Thomson 1939b: 216). Moreover, McConnel (1930: 182) refers to visiting between relatives: "When food supplies are scarce in any locality or a variety of diet is desired, members of one clan may visit their relatives in other clans whose hunting grounds provide other sources of supply." However, scarcity and a desire for change are not the only reasons. Seasonal and localised abundances may attract large groups to particular campsites. Members of the clan in whose territory a particular food item occurs in abundance are then given the opportunity to act as hosts:

> At special seasons, when food is plentiful in any locality, members of the clan in charge send out invitations to their relatives to come and join them. In this way large camps gather periodically on favourite hunting grounds - panja swamps[1], water-lilly lagoons, and reaches of the river where fish are plentiful. Social intercourse then centres round the available food supplies and social life is fostered by economic activities which include besides the procuring of food, the manufacture of weapons, tools and implements, canoes, dilly-bags, utensils, etc. (McConnel 1930: 182).

In addition, Thomson writes an entire paper on the correct etiquette

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1. Cf. McConnel (1957: 4): '... the corms of the rushes *(mai kɔ:dala)* ...are a staple food in the dry season. The corms... (are) sometimes called *"pandya"*....' Elsewhere (1953: 31) she identifies it as Scirpus littoralis. Thomson (1946: 165) refers to mai' kutilla. He identifies it as Heleocharis sphacelata, the "Corm of Tall Spike Rush." (cf. Thomson 1939b: 215, where there is a reference to Heleocharis sphacetata)

   At Aurukun and Edward River it is now commonly referred to in English as "bulgru".

required of visitors entering another camp (1932; see also McConnel 1934: 351); and McConnel (1930; 103) refers to the regulations and behaviours governing the distribution of food in the course of normal camp life:

> Quietly and formally men and women make their gifts of food to relatives to whom such gifts are due. Gifts of hospitality are made to the stranger in the camp. A man sends food to his mother-in-law through his wife or sister. Sometimes a mourner's debt is paid, when the women present their gifts to the accompaniment of the mourning song and dance.

If men were not commonly residing in camps with their mothers-in-law, were wives to quit their husband's residential group after his death, it would be difficult indeed to understand the apparently normative character of some of these behaviours. For these reasons alone, then, the model of the clan-based horde must be seriously challenged. It might be that the clan-based horde living on its own land represents an Archer River (and Aboriginal) ideal. However, the question which must then be asked is whether environmental or social conditions can maintain sufficient stability for the ideal ever to be achieved, or, once achieved, to survive for any length of time.

Unfortunately, neither McConnel nor Thomson ever recorded the precise composition of residential groups. Consequently it is impossible to answer any of these questions on the basis of concrete data. Moreover, there is an additional issue which has not yet been considered, viz., the nature and availability of sites for occupation within the clan estate.

In this connexion it must be noted that McConnel and Thomson never mapped clan estates in any detail. McConnel did visit a number of sites (notably auwa, "totemic centres") which she plotted on a map (1930: 191) and it is possible, by establishing the clan

which controls these sites, to plot its approximate location.[1] Thomson mapped clan territories among the Tjungundji (1934: 222-223), the speakers of a Northern Paman language living near Mapoon. However, he attempted nothing similar for any of the Wik groups. Consequently, on the basis of their data we have no way of establishing the dimensions of each estate, the nature of its boundaries, whether estates were continuous or discontinuous, the territorial range covered by named sites, the nature of the sites themselves, or the ways in which they were related to each other. Were all named sites occupation sites? What were the determining features of occupation sites? How were the sites located with respect to resource availabilities? Were all parts of the clan estate open to all members of the clan (or to other, perhaps temporary, residents within the estate) or were there internal restrictions governing mobility and resource exploitation?

McConnel (1930: 100-4) and Thomson (1939: 216-9) both comment on features governing the choice of camp sites, stressing the availability of water and firewood, drainage, freedom from mosquitoes, unimpeded air flow during hot weather, protection from the heavy winds and rain of the monsoon season, and to a lesser degree access to resources. Thomson, especially, shows that some of the factors are seasonally determined. He writes (1939b: 219):

> It must be remembered that ... immediately after the rains the weather is still warm... In the inland camps such as those on the river banks, sleeping platforms... are employed... The main objective in these camps is to get the benefit of the winds, to escape the attacks of the mosquitoes, and to avoid travelling through heavy grass with the attendant hardship and danger from venomous snakes.

However, neither writer discusses the key factors (especially access

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1. This was the procedure followed in preparing Map 2 (in Chapter 2).

to resources) with respect to a particular site, or to the full range of sites occurring within a given clan estate. In short, there is no firm basis for assessing the clan estate as a land system.

Seasonality can have effects other than causing abundance or scarcities of local resources, or minor readjustments in the choice of camp sites. It can also produce major shifts in patterns of residence and mobility. In the dry season the Archer River not infrequently ceases to flow altogether; and below "Waterfall", a rocky bar which stretches across the river about 45 km. upstream from its mouth (about 25 km. in a direct line from the coast) the Archer is subject to tidal variation and the water becomes salty. In the wet season, the river bears an enormous volume of freshwater. It floods out extensively over the neighbouring countryside in all directions. Stanton (1976: 38-9) writes of Archer Bend, in the region of the junction of the Archer and Coen Rivers:

> About eight kilometres wide at this point, the flood plain of the river contains a fascinating variety of vegetation types... The previous wet season had, at the time of inspection, left its mark on the trees, and together with the numerous anastomosing channels and lagoons of the floodplain, bare ground, and deep silt and sand deposits far from the river, had painted an awe-inspiring picture of the occasional extent of the seasonal floods in this part of the world.
>
> ... Except in eucalyptus dominated communities there is little ground cover, and much evidence of lengthy immersion during floods.

Further downstream the Kirke and Love Rivers bear some of the run-off during this season. The coastal plains are inundated, and freshwater pours out into the open sea.

In the dry season freshwater may be available only in the large closed lagoons in the actual river bed. Away from the river lagoons, water sources may be scarce, or may dry up entirely.

Along the lower reaches of the river, groups may be totally dependent on water sources away from the river as the river turns salty.

In the wet season the inland groups must move to higher ground, or perhaps retreat to those few remaining high points (mostly isolated patches of sand or silt covered with vine or gallery forest on the river levees) which lie out of reach of all but the highest floods. It may be that the entire clan estate is flooded during the wet season; or, alternatively, that it is without reliable sources of freshwater during the dry season. Both eventualities are unlikely, though they should be considered. More likely, only certain campsites may offer any possibility of maintaining communication with residential groups camped at other localities during the worst of the flooding. Such considerations may require people to reside away from their own clan land. Two major strategies suggest themselves. The first would involve moving to the coastal region where there are good campsites during the wet season, where long residual sandridges, running parallel to the coast, provide for easy mobility along a north-south axis, and where the use of canoes is possible in the relatively peaceful waters of the estuary. Upstream the use of canoes may be difficult because of the swift flow of the main river channel and flood-borne debris. Also, arguably, the coastal region provides a wider range of food during the wet season which is regarded as being one of food shortage. Possibly the mangrove zones are a crucial food source at this time of the year.

The alternative strategy would be to retreat further inland. Higher relief, deeper river channels and swifter run-off would ensure at least some flood-free ground, and relatively easy mobility (though confined, for a period, to either the north or the south of the main river).

Without an adequate survey, especially of the middle reaches of the river, these remarks must remain at the level of preliminary hypotheses.

Failing an actual survey, and given the fact that, when they conducted their fieldwork, sites were either deserted or only intermittently occupied, McConnel and Thomson had another course of action open to them. Useful data might have been obtained through formal elicitation: asking informants to recall who was present at events at which they themselves were present; asking them to list off all named sites within their clan estate; and, having done this, to check off their desirable features, the seasons they were occupied, the resources accessible from each site, and so on. Particular sites may have been associated with events which occurred regularly, such as ceremonies or particular economic activities. Other sites may be associated with irregular social events such as births, deaths, or fights. Certain sites may also have important totemic or mythological associations - stories, songs, particular behaviour and beliefs and so on. However, except in a very limited and unsystematic way, McConnel and Thomson do not appear to have followed any of these lines of enquiry. In short, the relationship between social organization and territoriality along the Archer River is poorly explicated by Thomson and McConnel. Their combined writings lack detailed "on-the-ground" observations. Moreover, they both failed to consider the logical difficulties built into their accounts.

There are several residual issues which require brief comment:

(1) Campsites - internal arrangements:

Thomson provides no details of the internal disposition of campsites. McConnel (1930: 104) makes a few useful comments:

> The camp fire is the centre of family life, around which a man and his wife, or wives or children sleep and feed. Convention guards the approach to the camp fire. Certain relatives are welcomed, others are tabooed. The arrangement of the camp fires depends upon the relationship of the families to one another - some relatives may camp close, others only at a distance. When the tribes meet together, each takes up its position in the camp according to the direction whence the tribe has come.

However, the account contains a difficulty which she makes no apparent effort to resolve. On the one hand, specific campsites (the placement of camp fires) are allocated on the basis of interfamilial relationships Presumably this means that a family moving into a general campsite will be placed near a family with which its members have links. (It is unfortunate that McConnel does not specify the usual range (and "distance") of the kin types which provide the links between the families, for it is individuals within families which are linked, in the first instance, rather than the families themselves.) On the other hand, in the case of "inter-tribal" gatherings, kinship considerations seem to bow before considerations of directionality. Does McConnel mean to imply that "tribes" are essentially endogamous, and that only in the case of demonstrable consanguineal links will families camp in some degree of propinquity to each other? This implication would fly in the face of Thomson's remarks recorded earlier (p. 68) about patterns of interaction between clans which neighbour each other but are affiliated differently linguistically (i.e. "tribally"). Perhaps both principles - kinship and directionality - are invoked simultaneously. Alternatively, it may only be on ceremonial occasions that directionality alone is invoked. Certainly McConnel stresses that special conditions apply in such circumstances, viz., fighting is prohibited (1930: 104).

(2) Population:

McConnel (1930: 181) believes that the clans "... were probably

at one time equally large." Before the depopulation brought on by the contact situation, each clan would have consisted of "at least forty or fifty members." She gives no reasons to support her claim of demographic stability in the pre-European situation; or reasons for deciding on what is apparently an arbitrary figure. Working from her "List of local groups and totems of the Wik-Munkan tribes" (McConnel 1934: 204-5), and treating only groups I-XI, which belong to the Archer River, she gives a population estimate of 106 (taking her higher estimates rather than the lower; on the basis of the latter, the population of the Archer River, in 1929, would have been 82). However, in reconstructing the pre-contact population McConnel (1930: 181) feels justified in multiplying the number of clans (or local groups) by her projected figure, i.e., 11 multiplied by 40, giving a total population of 440. (In McConnel's terms we can take this as a lower limit.) If we treat McConnel's sub-groups, i.e., those to which for unexplained reasons she assigns a letter in lower case, e.g., groups IXa, IXb, and so on, and take the higher projection for the number of clan members, there are 14 groups to be multiplied by 50, giving a total population of 700. (In McConnel's terms we can take this as a higher limit.) This whole procedure is reminiscent of that adopted by Radcliffe-Brown (1913: 145-6). It must be seriously challenged on grounds which have already been stated, viz., that there is no evidence indicating a rational allocation of resources, or the manipulation of birth rates and rates of mortality, so that each "clan territory" could support an equivalent population. Moreover, she provides no clue why she chose a figure of "at least forty or fifty". Radcliffe-Brown's figure was "not less than 30 individuals". He advised that his procedure was, in fact, "a very rough estimate, and no reliance must be placed on it" (1913: 146). The comment applies equally well to McConnel's estimate.

(3) Size of estates and population density:

McConnel (1930: 181) notes that "At the present moment, the coastal areas are more densely populated in proportion to their size than is the Wik-munkan territory proper." She calculates that clan estates were "approximately from fifty to a hundred square miles" in area, and that population density - "naturally but a rough estimate" - was "probably at one time, one person to two square miles."

Thomson (1935b: 462) argues that population densities were always higher on the coast than inland. He makes the general remarks that:

> ... bush tribes, such as the Wik Monkan of the Archer River district... generally occupy much larger territories than the seafaring peoples of the coast. This does not necessarily mean that they are numerically stronger than the sandbeach tribes (although in the case of the Wik Monkan and Kanju tribes it is so). Among the seafaring people who obtain much of their food from the sea, the density of the population per square mile is much greater than in the bush tribes where the natives are living as hunters and collectors and where the individual clan territories must therefore be greater in extent.

Thomson prefaces these remarks with a series of comments to the effect that the fishing economy of the coastal groups (especially along the east coast) makes them somewhat aberrant within the Australian context. He probably refers to population density, as well as to the degree of sedentariness permitted by this régime. According to Thomson (1935b: 460-2), the inland groups are "more typical of the Australian mainland aboriginal."

Chapter 5 :

"Totemic Organization", life crises and ceremonial life: Archer River

A Totemic Organization:

McConnel never defines what she means by "totem" or "totemic". Her clearest statement of what she calls "totemic organization" (among the Wik-Mungkana) is contained in her 1936 article, *Totemic Hero-Cults in Cape York Peninsula*. She writes (1936: 456-58):

> The chief characteristics of the Wikmunkan totemic "norm" may be summarised as follows:
>
> 1. Each clan is associated with a number of clan-ancestors *(pulwaiya)*, who are believed to be incarnated in some form, and whose "story-places" or totemic centres *(auwa)* are to be found in the local hunting-areas of the clans to which they belong. From certain of these *pulwaiya* the clan members derive their names. The *pulwaiya* vary in importance, not only within the clan itself, but within the tribe or group of tribes.
>
> 2. Whilst each *pulwaiya*-cult is *controlled* by members of the particular clan to which it belongs, and can be approached only through them as intermediaries, the cult exists for the benefit of the tribe or tribes as a whole. Each *pulwaiya* is to be regarded therefore not only as a clan-totem, but as extra-clan or a tribal hero, who bestows benefits upon all members of the tribe or tribes concerned.
>
> 3. The totemic objects, in which the *pulwaiya* are incarnated and which are distributed amongst the various clans and tribes, are complementary and cover practically every recognized aspect of social life, i.e., physical, physiological, economic, purely social, and spiritual, whilst the associated ritual provides for every practical, social and spiritual necessity as understood by these tribes. Reduplication of totems occurs only in a few cases, in the coastal tribes. Such reduplication suggests disturbance in local settlement of the coastal areas ...
>
> 4. The more socially significant the social function of the *pulwaiya*, e.g. moon, rainbow serpent, crocodile, bullroarer and chief food products,

such as emu, native companion, kangaroo, possum, waterlily, yam, etc., the more highly-developed and specialized is the cult, mythology and ritual, of the associated *pulwaiya* or culture-hero. In fact there would appear to be a kind of hierarchy among these *pulwaiya*.

5. Each *pulwaiya* cult is associated with:
   (i) A local clan.
   (ii) Totemic-centre, "story-place," or *auwa*, where the *pulwaiya* originally "went down" *(tu.tya)* after "looking for a place to settle." This *auwa* is appropriately situated in accordance with the nature and habits of the totemic object, the form of which is assumed by the *pulwaiya*. At this *auwa* the sacred ritual is believed to have been originally inaugurated and is now performed on special occasions for the perpetuation of the benefits derived from the totemic object concerned.
   (iii) A group of myths describing the original activities of the *pulwaiya* and the manner of the hero's transformation into the totemic object, and the inauguration of ritual with which the *pulwaiya* is associated.
   (iv) A series of dramas, dances and chants, based on the same themes, which vary in importance and secrecy, being only gradually revealed to initiates either during or after initiation, or reserved for men of riper age - even grey-haired men.

At this point I do not wish to take up all the points raised by McConnel. She cites a "typical" case which will be described in detail in Part III (Chapter 13). As a prelude to that discussion, my tasks here are twofold. Firstly, I wish to draw out a number of concepts which McConnel raises in her summary, but which she deals with inadequately. I refer to three concepts: viz., *pulwaiya, auwa* and "story". Secondly, on the basis of the above discussion I wish to introduce a number of analytical distinctions which McConnel fails to make, or fails to preserve. I refer especially to the distinction which must be maintained between *pulwaiya* and *auwa*. (The first is *people*-oriented; the second is *land*-oriented.) There are a number of subsidiary issues which also should be treated in depth, viz., personal naming, mortuary ritual, and the relationship between three

orders of individuals: the yet-to-be-born, the living, and the dead. I shall deal with these issues in the section B labelled Life crises and initiation ceremonies.

Three concepts: *pulwaiya, auwa* and "story"

1. *pulwaiya:*

McConnel (1930: 185) writes:

> The Wik-munkan word for totem is *pulwaiya*. *Pul* or *pola* is the term used to distinguish the father's father or a forbear in the male line. *Waiya* is sometimes used with kinship terms to signify "old" ...

She states clearly that "There is an intimate personal link between a *pulwaiya* and its clan people" (1930: 185). By way of example, she notes that "On leaving the totemic centre of the cuscus a child was told to say "*Apo! polia!*" i.e., "Goodbye, grandfather!" as if speaking to a real person." McConnel does not seem to have accepted the evidence before her. Might not the child have indeed been speaking, or thought he was speaking, to a real person? There is no reason for McConnel to assume - unless she has other evidence which she does not produce in her writings - that this practice is any different from the current practice at Aurukun for adults and children, when they are passing the cemetery, to call out *apow*.

Even if McConnel is correct in implying that the *pulwaiya* are not real people when addressed at their totem centres, it is a nice point for her informants have explicitly stated to her that the *pulwaiya* were real people, who performed certain activities, and who now reside at the *auwa*.

There is a major confusion in McConnel's writings. Instead of maintaining a critical stance, she has simply taken two separate

orders of reality as isomorphic. In short, she has accepted the identification - apparent or real - which her informants seem to make between *pulwaiya* as real people (having lived in the immediate historic past, or indeed still living) and various animals, plants or objects, observable in the real world, and also called *pulwaiya*. Perhaps her failure to maintain the distinction tells us something of the nature of the phenomena with which she is dealing. However, analytically her cause would have been better served had she attempted to investigate the nature of the relationship between the two orders. How do they come to be identified? Why are they linked with the term for father's father, and not with other kin terms? What is the nature of the link between living people and *pulwaiya* as living people (i.e., as kinsmen)? And what is the nature of the link between people and *pulwaiya* as animals, plants, objects or spirits? McConnel states that the *pulwaiya* (as living people) are *transformed* into *pulwaiya* (as animals, plants and so on); expressed differently, she sees the *pulwaiya* (as people) incarnated as *pulwaiya* (as plants, animals and so on). The following passage provides her final and clearest statement on the relationship between the two:

> The sentiments of the clan are naturally linked with the clan forbears who formed its traditions and who, endowed with miraculous powers by the mystery of death, are deemed capable of regulating the forces of nature which benefit mankind and who are thus intimately associated with the totemic objects required for the welfare of the clan. It is but a short step for the totem which represents the clan to become identified with the clan ancestors. Myths and legends forge a closer link by making of the ancestor a kind of creator responsible for the origin of the totem, usually in terms of a transformation legend according to which the ancestor turns into the totem at death. (1957: 203; see also 1930: 187 for a preliminary statement of some of the same ideas.)

Might it not be possible to set McConnel's series of short steps in reverse? The clan forbears die but continue to live in the clan land and are able to help the living. If McConnel's argument

were correct, the clan ancestors would be identified with everything which is important to the clan's welfare. In other words, each clan would have enormous lists of totems, and there would be no requirement that each clan's totems should be distinct from the totems of other clans. The question seems to resolve itself into two issues: What is the relationship between clan members and their ancestors? And, what is the nature of the restricted set of items which are in fact linked with the clan ancestors? As part of this second issue the question of the distinctiveness of clan totems must be raised. It would be crucial to any investigation to examine any cases where clan totems overlapped.

I wish to make one additional point before proceeding any further. McConnel (1957: 205) states that "The totems, ... identified with its interests and sentiments, come to represent the clan as a kinship group and symbolize its unity...." If we can accept that the *pulwaiya* are in the first place people, then we are dealing with actual kin from the start. Totems, in the sense that McConnel uses the term here, are attached to kinsmen. It is wrong for McConnel to invert the relationship.

2. *Auwa:*

McConnel (1930: 187) notes that "The *pulwaiya* has a sacred place of origin, its *auwa*, where it resides and whence it issues forth." In what form does it reside at its *auwa*? McConnel is not altogether clear on this point. Indeed, the statement exemplifies her confusion between the two aspects of the *pulwaiya* - as people, and as non-human or extra-human entities. We have already been told that the *auwa* is the place where the *pulwaiya* died, or "went down" (1936: 457). Now we are told that the *auwa* is their "place of origin."

What is the nature of the *auwa*? McConnel (1930: 117) writes:

> ...(The) *auwa* or totem-centres are sometimes the nests and breeding places of the birds, animals and plants concerned, and are always situated on the hunting grounds of the clan to which they belong, where the totemic species is abundant. Each *auwa* has its own peculiar characteristics. Trees, bushes, rocks, naturally or artificially arranged, ant-beds, or holes in the ground in the vicinity of the *auwa* are sacred to the totems. There is always water near by in the shape of river, creek, lagoon, waterhole, swamp or well at the bottom of which the *pulwaiya* resides and into which the dead of the clan are believed to go. They are said to play about the vicinity of the *auwa* in the form of their totem. This is perhaps why plants or animals are protected near the *auwa* of their representative totem and why the killing of an animal or the injuring of a plant near its *auwa* is not only strictly forbidden but believed to be attended by grave consequences.

This is a useful account. However, it includes a number of difficulties:

1. The first difficulty is that there are a large number of habitats in which animals and plants can be found; why, then, is it that one particular site is singled out to become the *auwa* of the animal or the plant it represents?

2. Maintaining McConnel's general position for the moment: (a) What is an appropriate habitat for items which are not plants or animals, e.g., ghosts, sweethearts, babies, young girls and bullroarers? (b) What happens when the environment changes and the *auwa* is found in a habitat which is no longer "appropriate"?

3. If the spirits of the dead "play about" in the region of the *auwa*, and, as a consequence, no animal or plant should be taken or injured in the vicinity of its representative *auwa*, how can one be sure that animals or plants found further afield are not of the same status? Furthermore, in Western Cape York Peninsula (and elsewhere), "play about" almost always refers to

dance performances. It would seem that the notion McConnel raises here ought to be looked at in the context of dance performances among the living, who could also be interpreted as "playing about", and "in the form of their totem."

4. McConnel notes that *auwa* are associated with water sources of various kinds. However, camping sites too are invariably associated with water sources. On this basis two questions can be asked: What is the relationship between *auwa* and camp sites? If the two are frequently associated, might it be that the spirits of the dead, by being directed to a certain waterhole, or lagoon, and so on, are in fact returning to sites where they camped when they were alive? One suspects that this is so. Unfortunately, McConnel's data do not help us.

What is the function of the *auwa*? McConnel (1930: 187) indicates that ceremonies are performed at the *auwa* "to ensure a plentiful supply of the totemic object". The procedure consists in making appeals to the ghosts or spirits of the dead now residing at the *auwa*. One implication is, of course, that there are spirits of the dead residing at each of the *auwa*. This raises the question of how the allocation of spirits to each site is achieved. McConnel does not assist us in the matter.

What are the main features of the ceremonies? McConnel (1930: 187) writes:

> The "increase" ceremony is performed by the leading men in the presence of other members of the clan. Strangers may be admitted, in which case sweat from the armpits of the leaders is rubbed over their faces and chests so that the totem will smell and know that they "belong" and no harm will befall them for their intrusion. The leading men paint themselves for the ceremony with white clay to represent the

> totemic object. The ritual differs with the various *auwa*. Trees may be hit, the ground stamped upon, the tops of ant-beds may be hit off, the ground swept with bushes and mysterious sounds made, the totem being instructed to "come up plenty" and to go in all directions for the use of man.

It would have been interesting had McConnel attempted to establish whether there was any correlation between the types of activities performed at a particular auwa and the phenomenon which the *auwa* represented. Perhaps patterns would have emerged, either conceptual in nature (i.e., in the event where phenomena classified together according to certain principles had similar rituals performed at their *auwa*) or regional. McConnel also may have attempted to record the body paint designs used at each *auwa*, as well as to demystify her "mysterious sounds". However, it is clear that she only saw one or two actual rituals. She notes (1930: 188) that "many rites have fallen into disuse" and gives as the reason that "no one is left to renew them..." Her claim that "It is reasonable to suppose that increase rites were performed at all totemic centres where an increase of the totem was desired" is perhaps overstated. It could equally be true that ceremonies were only held occasionally, or perhaps not at all sites, or only under certain conditions. Equally her claim (1930: 187-188) that "It is as if each clan made itself responsible for the origin, sufficiency and continuity of those objects of social and economic value associated with its daily needs, so that among the various local clans most human wants are met" is also open to dispute. McConnel attempts to overcome the potential difficulty that each local clan does not have *auwa* for all the resources it requires by arguing that "The complementary nature of the clan totems reflects the economic interdependence of the clans and the unity of the tribes" (1957: 203). However, this argument creates more difficulties than it resolves (See Part III, Chapter 14).

3. "Stories":

McConnel (1957: XIX), introducing her collection of *Wik* oral literature, makes the commendable point that she has used '...the word "story" (borrowed by these people...) in preference to the word "myth" with its implication of unreality - inadequate where people believe the stories they tell.' It is ironic, then, that she chose to label the collection Myths of the Muŋkan. More to the point, if McConnel is correct, Wik oral literature is, in fact, Wik history.

McConnel notes that the "stories" are linked to *pulwaiya, auwa* and the ceremonies which occur at them in the following way:

> The myth is a recital of the original creative activities of the *pulwaiya* (totemic clan ancestor and hero-god) and the inauguration in the beginning of the ritual which forms the precedent for its present practice. As the *pulwaiya* "went down" *(tutya)* into his appropriate *auwa* he assumed or "caused to be" the form of the totemic object with which he is associated. The ritual is not a mere recital of the original creative activities of the *pulwaiya*, but reflects chiefly the relationship between the *pulwaiya* and his present-day clansmen. The ritual is sacramental in that by this means they enter into contact with their *pulwaiya*, who "comes out" at their request and perpetuates for their needs the objects for which he is responsible. Myths often have a currency as legends or stories but the real inner meaning of the myths in relation to ritual is known only to a few, and is the special property of a clan. One man said he had "dreamed" the ritual of which he was in charge, but that his father had also "dreamed" it before him. The ritualistic procedure is apparently handed down from one generation to another relatively intact, but it seems that a man "re-dreams" the ritual and so acquires the necessary mystical qualifications for carrying it on. (1935: 66)

It is worth pointing out that the *pulwaiya* did not only "leave" rituals. McConnel (1930: 187) notes that "... in the ghost clan... the *pulwaiya* are human beings who are said to have taught men the arts of building the dams and fish traps and cooking the fish in ant bed ovens" (see also 1930: 198). Moreover, they have

left their mark on the landscape, not only in the form of *auwa*, but other features as well. For example, on the Archer River small creeks are pointed out as the tracks followed by the *pulwaiya*, and the red rocks at *Tumauwa* (thuma-awa; thuma - fire) are said to have been left by the fire *pulwaiya* (1930: 194).

With respect to the rituals left by the *pulwaiya*, there are two interesting issues which should be pursued. Firstly, it seems that McConnel confuses two sets of ceremonial activities: on the one hand, so-called "increase ceremonies", which must be performed at the *auwa*, and, on the other, rituals which are not necessarily fixed at particular localities. The latter belong to two major ceremonies, uchanama and winychinama (see Section B).

The second issue is the question of transmission. It is clear that there are two mechanisms whereby rituals can be transmitted, firstly, through their actual performance, and secondly, as McConnel indicates here, through "dreaming". What "dreaming" means McConnel does not explicate. It is a question to which we shall return later (in Chapter 11, under Field bosses). In the meantime, it remains unresolved, from McConnel's comments, whether the original *pulwaiya* "left" the ritual by actually instructing those who continued to live on after them, or whether they contacted the living through "dreams". Given Aboriginal ideology, if not all over Australia then certainly for this area, there can be no question that the creators of the ritual can be any other than the *pulwaiya* themselves.

To review briefly the previous section:

1. The *pulwaiya* are perceived as actual kin, i.e., their primary referent is *people*.

2. It is important to maintain a distinction between *pulwaiya* as people, and *pulwaiya* as plants, animals, and other objects. To see the former simply as incarnated in animal, plant or other object means that the relationship between the two orders defies analysis.
3. The *auwa* are *places*, i.e., their primary referent is precise localities.
4. McConnel uses the word, totem, interchangeably for both *pulwaiya* and *auwa*. That is, she confuses two terms of an analytical distinction which her informants themselves make, viz., between person and place. If there is a system of equivalences operating between the two systems, it can only be unveiled by examining the relationship between people and place.
5. Although *auwa* are formally equivalent at one level, it should be possible to make finer distinctions between them on the basis of the phenomena which they are said to represent, the nature of the sites themselves, and the nature and the regularity of the rituals which occur there.
6. *Pulwaiya* and *auwa* are linked through historical accounts ("stories") in which the *pulwaiya* are said to have created the *auwa*.
7. While McConnel notes that the *pulwaiya* created (and "left") various cultural items and various natural features (including the *auwa* themselves) it seems likely that they also created (and "left") the rituals which relate to them.
8. The rituals are transmitted by two mechanisms: by instruction (from one generation to the next) and through "dreams".
9. It seems likely that McConnel confuses two types of ritual - the rites which occur at so-called "initiation ceremonies", and the rites performed at so-called "increase ceremonies".

Thomson, apart from noting the totemic character of the clans, has little to say on the subject of totemism among the Wik-Mungkana. He appears to have abandoned the field to McConnel. However, characteristically, he does provide useful definitions of some of those indigenous categories which McConnel employs but seldom explicates. He does not refer to the concept *pulwaiya*; however, with respect to *auwa* (his *au'wa*; e.g., Thomson 1936: 375) which he glosses in English as "totem center", he writes:

> Auwa appearing after a name, except in idiomatic expressions, always signifies a totem center, e.g., kaŋ'kaŋ is the white-bellied sea-eagle; kaŋ'kaŋ auwa the totem center of this bird. Similarly pätj is a shooting star; pätjauwa the shooting star totem center (Thomson 1935b: 470, note 17).

With respect to its "idiomatic" usages, he writes:

> Au'wa is also used idiomatically in an abstract sense for any habitual action, e.g., a curious person is the ka taiyin enkän wenta, literally more strong asking mad; hence ka taiyin enkän wenta au'wa is a person who habitually asks questions, a person with an insatiable curiosity (Thomson 1936: 389, note 23).

With respect to "story" or "myth", he notes that the indigenous category is labelled wik kat:

> Kät is most frequently used in the sense of bad, stinking, decayed; in this sense when used for "myth" it simply means old, old fashioned; wik kät, talk of olden times, hence a myth or legend (Thomson 1936: 386, note 18).

B Life crises and initiation ceremonies:

There appear to be three major life crises among the Archer River people: birth, initiation and death. There are no initiation ceremonies as such for women, although women take important, if subsidiary, roles in the male ceremonies. It should be noted that, given the general Australian pattern, these activities will not only focus on "making men". They can also be expected to mark transitions for participants other than the initiates, as well as to reconfirm the status of some of the more prominent celebrants.

Birth and death, too, involve transitions other than for the central figure, viz., the newborn infant, or the deceased person. For example, a woman becomes a mother, a spouse becomes a widow, and so on.

Apart from these major life crises I shall also refer to betrothal, first menstruation, marriage and bodily operations. None of these activities is surrounded by elaborate formalities.

(1) Birth

Birth involves a complex set of transitions. Not only is a child born (moving from a status of yet-to-be-born), but it marks the termination of the period of pregnancy for the mother and her husband becomes a father. Moreover, it marks the separation of husband and wife for a period, various female relatives of the mother-to-be are involved as midwives, and it creates new social relationships for a whole range of individuals. Some of these relationships appear to be singled out for particular attention by the Archer River people.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that a complex set of transition is set in motion at the moment of conception. A woman becomes pregnant and is subject to special restrictions; a child is present in foetal form within its mother's body; and the genitor is linked with the child in complex ways. He, too, must observe special restrictions. Even before birth the parents must regulate their behaviour in the interests of their unborn child. In a real way, the child has acquired a social identity before birth.

In their writings, McConnel and Thomson include particularly rich material on the events leading up to birth, on the actual delivery

of the child, and on the events subsequent to birth. I propose to treat their data in terms of these three periods, viz., the pre-natal period; labour and delivery; and the post-natal period.

(a) Pre-natal period:

In Fatherhood in the Wik Monkan tribe, Thomson (1936: 374-93) was concerned to demonstrate that the Wik-Mungkana had a theory of bisexual reproduction.[1] In the course of the argument he gives a detailed account of pregnancy. Firstly he remarks that "repeated sexual acts are necessary to build up the baby from seminal fluid". Then he discusses at length the signs of pregnancy recognized by the Wik-Mungkana. He quotes a female informant:

> When the woman becomes aware of the cessation of the menses she talks only to her husband and to her mother. People notice now that the breast (pap) enlarges and changes, but they do not yet speak openly of her condition. The nipples...become black ...Then the hypogastrium swells. The woman is not yet known as impänäŋ. The navel (kort'n) is now thrust outward and everybody knows definitely that the woman is pregnant. Her entire body enlarges..., her abdomen grows bigger... (Thomson 1936: 377).

By contrast, McConnel (1934: 317) merely notes that the onset of pregnancy is recognized by sickness, or other signs of pregnancy, such as the swelling of the breasts.

When the pregnancy is recognized by the society at large the woman is referred to and addressed as impänäŋ (Thomson 1936: 378). Thomson remarks that the term is employed "even in polite conversation, and takes precedence over the kinship term in general use". According to McConnel (1934: 317), when women are pregnant they are referred to as taptinti. I should also point out that neither McConnel nor

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1. McConnel (1935: 70-1) supports this view. She cites, as evidence, the "myth of the two *moipaka*": '... the words *puka wunpula puleilina* or "a baby those-two-laid-down (inside) together" definitely suggests (sic) that sex-connection is believed to be instrumental in child birth' (p. 71).

Thomson indicates whether there is a special term applied to women who are pregnant for the first time; nor do they indicate whether there is a special term which applies to women who have had a child. Meanwhile, her husband gains a new status:

> Her husband is now known as impänäŋ wunpun (impänäŋ, the pregnant one; wunpun, placer, begetter), a term also used in place of the usual kinship terms. This terminology may be extended to other relations; e.g., the father's younger brother may be called pip emät'n impänäŋ (the growing father of the pregnant one). (Thomson 1936: 378)

On the basis of this information it is hard to believe that the child has not been assigned a social position even before birth.

Although neither writer, unfortunately, considers the question of contraception, McConnel (1934: 317) notes that if the child is not wanted an abortion may be induced. She lists some of the methods: "...by pushing downwards on the abdomen, tying a string tight round the abdomen, or by eating and drinking herbs of certain kinds". Neither ethnographer raises the matter of "spirit children" commonly reported for the rest of Australia. Thomson (1936: 375) and McConnel (1930: 183; 1957: 142, passim) both refer to "a baby totem center" (to borrow Thomson's expression) at oony-awa. Here (again to borrow Thomson's expression) "ceremonies for the increase of babies are carried out." However, there is nothing linking the site specifically with "spirit children".

McConnel (1934: 317) usefully records that certain precautions are taken if a woman wishes to keep her child, e.g., she may tie "ti-tree bark around her body when diving for water-lilies..." Unfortunately, she does not tell us the purpose of this precaution, nor how it is supposed to operate. Moreover, she does not comment on whether the mother is advised to eat certain types of food, or

to avoid others, or whether restrictions apply to the father. However, Thomson (1936: 378-9) stresses that food restrictions are applied both to the pregnant woman and to her husband. Thomson's discussion of these restrictions is extensive but far from clear. It appears that restrictions do not apply in any systematically parallel way to both wife and husband, although there is some overlap in the items restricted, notably in the case of emu and brolga. Some of the restrictions are rather complex: "Neither the man nor woman may eat a wallaby or red kangaroo...that has been killed by a bush dog..., but if killed by a camp dog...he may eat it. If this taboo were broken the child would always be sick and thin..." (Thomson 1936: 379). Thomson seldom details the purpose of the restriction, or the consequences if it is ignored. When specified, it is invariably the child which is affected. As a final point it might be noted that although Thomson fails to comment on the fact, restrictions are often not applied to species as such, but only to the larger adult animals. Thus immature animals are generally available for consumption. Thomson indicates that there are no restrictions on eating vegetable foods.

Thomson does not tell us whether any other restrictions apply to the couple. A general reading of McConnel suggests that a woman maintains her habitual round of social and economic activities almost until the termination of her pregnancy (e.g., McConnel 1957: 137).

(b) Labour and delivery:

McConnel (1934: 117) remarks that "If possible, a woman will return to her mother's people to be cared for by them during childbirth." How long this is before the birth we are not told. Furthermore, it

is not altogether clear what she means by "mother's people". It seems McConnel really means the expectant mother's own clan estate where, given McConnel and Thomson's version of local organization and residential patterns, she would find her mother and her brothers living with her father. Logically it follows that if children are frequently born in their mother's clan estate, then Thomson's comments, reported earlier, linking clan estate with birth place must be placed in jeopardy.

As to the birth itself, McConnel (1934: 317-18) writes:

> When her time of delivery arrives, her mother *(kattha)* or some older experienced woman, such as her husband's mother *(puiya)* (sic), will be with her, and they will keep apart as much as possible from the main camp. The methods and ritual of childbirth are in the hands of women only, men being strictly tabooed from any participation in the actual birth. The expectant mother's mother will, however, be somewhere in the vicinity, walking about the bush, and the husband in communication. As the baby is being born, the mother's mother calls to her son, the baby's KALA, and informs him of the birth of his sister's child. Whereupon he will abstain from eating any fish or meat, lest the baby die. The father also, informed of the event, observes a similar food taboo. Women relations in attendance will bring yams and small fish for the mother to eat. Immediately after birth, the afterbirth *(mampa)* is severed from the navel cord *(kodan)*, and the end tied with gut from the wallaby's tail. The end of the cord next to the navel is also tied with gut. The afterbirth is then buried and a fire burned over the spot. It must not be burned lest the child die. No man, not even the father, will approach the place where the *mampa* is buried. It is strictly taboo. It is said that the *"mampa"* is "all the same twin" with the baby. The navel cord is allowed to come away of its own accord.

McConnel's account appears rather garbled. For example, the expectant mother is attended by her mother (i.e., the child's MM); and the child's MB- is nearby. This agrees with McConnel's remarks reported above. However, MM is also stated to be in communication with her DH, who, strictly speaking, stands in an avoidance relationship to her. The woman in labour may also be attended by her husband's

mother (pinya, not puiya, as it stands in McConnel's account), a relation who is normally avoided. Moreover, unless the child is born in its father's estate, it is unlikely that HM will be present (according to the orthodox version of local organization). Of course, it may be that deliveries occur in the child's father's estate, or the child's mother's estate, or even elsewhere. Depending on the location, and the composition of the local group, no doubt different women served as midwives.

Thomson's account throws no direct light on these issues. He notes simply that "at the onset of labour pains..., the husband moves to the single men's camp, and the woman moves at once to a shelter...some distance from the usual camp. This place becomes taboo and is known as the ark ŋänwi, it may be visited only by women until after the newly born child has been presented ceremonially to its father" (Thomson 1936: 379). In a later publication (1946: 160) he indicates that the midwife is a culturally-recognized rôle, and he designates the range of female kin from whom she may be drawn:

> The midwife who officiates, is generally one of the following relatives: *natjawaiyo* (father's mother), *kem'waiyo* (mother's mother), *mukk'waiyo* (mother's elder sister), *kat* (mother) or *pinya* (in this case the husband's mother)...

By discovering the so-called horde affiliation of these women and assuming, for the moment, that they perform their duties on the territory of their horde, we should be able to determine the clan estate in which the child is born. To do so we need make only two assumptions: firstly, the acceptability of the orthodox version of local organization given by McConnel and Thomson; and secondly, to assume that the midwives are married and not widowed. (It would be interesting to know, if women who have not married and who have not borne children can act as midwives.) Given these

conditions, it appears that births can occur in the clan estate of the child's mother's father, in the mother's mother's father's estate, in the mother's mother's sister's husband's estate, in the mother's father's estate, or, in the last case only, in the child's father's estate (i.e., in its own estate). Of course, with some marriages, certain of these estates may be the one of the same. For example, MM and MMZ may have married men from the same clan. However, Thomson does not indicate that the choice of women as midwives is dependent upon their marriage so that they are members of the child's father's horde. Were this the case it would have been easier for Thomson to specify the choice of midwife in terms of horde membership rather than kin type. There is some indication that pregnant women favour the support of female uterine kin, viz., M, MZ and MM. In some cases suitable uterine kin may be found in the husband's camp; at other times it would seem that the couple would be forced to move.

With respect to such issues as difficult labours, stillbirths, infanticide, and attitudes and practices in the case of multiple births, McConnel and Thomson have nothing to say.

Calling of the nämp kort'n (nhampa kuutana):

An important task performed by the midwife is the manipulation of the umbilical cord, and the calling of the kuutana name. Thomson (1936: 380) gives a clear account:

> After the birth of the child the navel name (namp kort'n) is determined by divination. The midwife takes the umbilical cord in her hand and shakes it, at the same time calling aloud names of various relatives of the child. The name called at the moment the placenta is delivered is the name of the baby. The umbilical cord is cut a few inches, about a finger length (ma'a puk), from the navel and is left until it dries and falls off. The afterbirth is buried at once. The relatives whose names may be

> called are the father and father's brothers and sisters, the child's actual brothers and sisters, mother's brothers and sisters, but not the mother herself, father's father or mother's father, as well as many other relatives of a similar order, actual or classificatory. Thenceforth a special relationship exists between the baby and the one whose name it has taken: they are "those two (one) navel (name)" (pull kort'n). To one another they say, "We two (one) navel (name)" (ŋäll kort'n).1

A later account (1946: 160) largely confirms this earlier report. The kin who can provide navel names are listed in the following order: F, FB+, FZ+, FZ-, FB- and FF, MF, MB-, MB+, MMB and FMB. The ordering is very close to that presented in the previous account. Again M is notably absent from the list (thus clearing up an ambiguity in the original report which might be thought to mean that FF, MF, etc. are excluded as well as M). However, the accounts diverge on two points. In this first account, the names of mother's sisters may be allocated as appropriate navel names. This is explicitly denied in the second account: "On the mother's side (*moiety*)[2] the names of the male relatives only are called and therefore the names of the mother herself... and of the mother's elder and younger sisters...are excluded" (Thomson 1946: 160). Moreover, in the first account, B and Z of the child are explicitly included; however, they do not appear in the second account.

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1. Thomson gives these same terms in a slightly different form in a later article (1946: 160), and introduces an additional term, *pull nämp*, translated as "Those two (one) name..." (WM. pula - 3 nom. dual, nhampa - name). However, he translates the term *ŋäll' kort'n* (WM. ngala kuutana) as '"my namesake" (lit. my navel)'. This translation is unacceptable; it should be rendered as "we two (one) navel" (WM. ngala - 1 nom. dual excl. kuutana - navel). Moreover, on several occasions he carelessly uses the term *pull kort'n* (pula kuutana; pula - 3 nom. dual) to refer simply to the person from whom the "navel name" derives (1946: 164). On the same page he refers to this same person as "its (i.e. the child's) nämp kort'n (nhampa kuutana). This is an acceptable usage.

2. I shall return to Thomson's use of the term "moiety" in the next

Moreover, the latter adds or clarifies some important points, as well as creating some new problems:

(1) Thomson specifies that the navel name "is the first, though not the most important name, and is acquired by all babies at birth".

(2) He indicates that the navel name "is the only one of the three personal names that may come from outside the child's own totemic group. The *namp kort'n* comes often, but by no means always, from a distant relative and may come therefore from a totem other than one of the child's own clan totems". There appears to be no reason why Thomson should stress "distant relative" when the allocation of a name from MB, MF, etc. (who must surely be considered "close relatives") is clearly possible. However, there is an ambiguity in the report which may account for the apparently curious weighting of Thomson's argument. There are two processes involved in the allocation of the navel name: firstly, the calling of the names of various kin of the child as the umbilical cord is manipulated; and secondly, the delivery of the placenta. The intersection of these two processes produces the (presumably correct) name. Neither of Thomson's accounts explains the relationship between the two processes in any causal sense. Yet clearly there is a native theory to explain the "moment of intersection". It would appear that this "moment" may occur some time after the midwife begins to manipulate the umbilical cord. Provided that this is true it is unlikely that the names of the first categories of kin listed will be allocated. Thus, even though Thomson argues that names of mother's relatives are called only after the names of agnates are exhausted, this may not mean that they are called as a last resort. There is some difficulty in knowing what he means by "distant relative", but it may well take in classificatory mother's brothers, etc.

(3) Thomson specifies that "with the father's relatives, names

of both males and females are called, but on the mother's side those of males only." This avoidance may not relate to "mother's side" so much as to those intimately involved in the actual birth: the mother herself, her sisters (possibly because they serve as midwives, or because they may be identified with her), and mother's mother (as midwife). The fact that FM is also omitted from the list would appear to support this argument, for not only may she serve as midwife (see the discussion above) but she must also be included among "father's relatives". Even if Thomson is using the term, "father's relatives", in an extremely loose sense to refer to the child's agnates, this need not affect the argument just presented.

McConnel (1957: 140) also provides an account. In her version it is only the names of F, FB+, FB-, and FF (actual) which are called. She notes (139) that "The child takes a name usually from its father's clan." She makes the supplementary comment that:

> As the name of a deceased person may not be spoken for some time after death, the name of a recently deceased relative of the father could not be called. But if the deceased father's father's name, for example, needs repeating after a lapse of time, it may be given to the child.

This is followed by a somewhat enigmatic passage: "As it is less likely for a younger than an older brother to die before the father, it is more appropriate to give the child the name of a father's younger brother, or that of a deceased older brother of the child to preserve the name. The child may (also) take its father's name..." Presumably the sense of McConnel's remarks can be summarised as follows:

(1) A male child may take the name of a male agnate (McConnel says nothing about female children).

(2) Restrictions placed on the names of people who have recently died mean that their names are not available.

(3) Since older people are more likely to die than younger people, and, thus, their names more likely to fall under restrictions, names of younger agnates (e.g., FB-) are to be preferred to those of older agnates (e.g., FB+).

(4) An alternative is to use the names of those who have died more distantly in time so that the names are maintained.

There is no evidence adduced by McConnel to support her somewhat folksy theory about the relative life chances of older versus younger people. Nor does she indicate whether the theory was proposed by her informants or is simply her own. In addition, McConnel does not consider possible alternative explanations for the use of names of people who have died at some time in the past, viz., the desire to preserve the memory of the person who had died, rather than just the name itself, or perhaps to posit some relationship between the deceased and the newborn (e.g., on the basis of physical resemblance).

Given their general unwillingness to refer to each other's published reports, it is perhaps not surprising that in McConnel's final version, published 11 years after Thomson's detailed treatment of the issue, she lists only close male agnates of the child and does not comment on her informant's failure to list uterine and other kin. Thus we have no knowledge, from her report, of whether close male agnates constitute the only acceptable category of kin, or whether her informant was simply giving an abbreviated version. Her comment that the name "usually" comes from the father's clan" at least allows room for the second possibility.

However, our difficulties do not end here. McConnel's reports do provide some information about the "moment of intersection", i.e., the coincidence of the calling of the name and the delivery of the afterbirth. The baby is said to "hear" the name; equally, the midwife is said to "hear" 'the afterbirth "listening" from the womb' (McConnel 1957: 140). Taking this information at face value there seems to be a three-way "communication" - between the child, the afterbirth, and the midwife.[1]

Despite her knowledge of the procedure for establishing the nhampa kuutana and some awareness of the mechanisms which underlie it, McConnel does not mention the term kuutana or "navel name" in connexion with it. She refers to the relationship established between the child and a male agnate (as it is in her account) as a "namesake" relationship (1957: 140-1). Elsewhere, however, she refers to a special term, *púkakɔ:dana* (WM. *puka* - baby, child, *kuutana* - umbilical cord), which she glosses as "child of the navel string" (1957: 141; see also 1934: 318). She says it applies to a "newborn child"; and its use ceases "when the navel cord comes away, and the child is presented to its *kaal* (MB-)." She comments that in cases where the child has no socially recognized father, it continues to be called *puka kodana* (McConnel 1934: 319). (See, also, McConnel 1957: 141, where she says that 'should the baby have no known father, it is a *púkakɔ:dana*...; it is cared for by its mother's people until adopted by the man the woman marries.'

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1. Thomson (1946: 164) notes that "Of the man or woman whose name the child has taken, the Wik Monkan say he heard the child's navel..." This suggests that there is, in fact, a four-way "communication". Neither Thomson nor McConnel specify that the nhampa kuutana should be drawn from a living individual. This raises the possibility that the kuutana relationship may be established across the boundaries of the living and the dead. However, the fact that there is a special ceremony during which the child is presented to its nhampa kuutana tends to argue, but not conclusively, against this suggestion.

This statement appears to conflict with the version - also given by McConnel and just reported - in which the term ceases to apply at the time the child is presented to its MB-. Unless the presentation to MB- were dependent on the child's having a "socially recognized father", these various remarks, taken together, do not make much sense.) Importantly, McConnel does not appear to link the term *pukakɔ:dana* with the practice of manipulating the umbilical cord, nor with the ceremonial disposal of the remanent piece of cord at a later date. Nevertheless it is clear from her accounts that the child is puka kuutana precisely until it is presented to its real father, or adopted by a surrogate. During this period, it bears only one name, its nhampa kuutana.

It is somewhat baffling to find, then, that McConnel (1934: 318) implies a special relationship between the puka kuutana and its MB-. There is ideological support for the relationship: 'It is said that a baby "gets bone" from its mother, and that the mother's brother is "one bone" with the child, because its mother and he also came from one mother.' (1934: 318) McConnel does not indicate whether the relationship holds for other siblings of the child's mother.

Unless McConnel was thinking of a case in which the nhampa kuutana of the child was derived from its MB- her account is difficult to follow, especially as she adds: "When the navel cord comes away of itself, the KALA returns. He receives the string, and lying on his back, the baby is placed face downwards on his body, i.e., against the navel of the KALA. It is thus identified first and foremost with its mother's family" (1934: 318). According to McConnel it is only after this ceremony that the wife returns to her husband.

This agrees poorly with Thomson's data. He reports that the period of seclusion lasts "two to four weeks" and that "the mother may not be seen by any man until she takes the child for ceremonial presentation to its father" (1946: 160). Unless the child is first presented to its MB- with the mother not in attendance, then it is impossible to reconcile the two accounts.

Both writers agree that when the piece of umbilical cord which is still attached to the child dries and falls off, it is preserved by encasing it in bees' wax (Thomson 1946: 160; McConnel 1953: 18). McConnel notes that it is considered essential to ensure its preservation. Thomson (1946: 165) adds that the cord, encased in wax, becomes a pendant decorated with "strips of yellow orchid bark". From that point on, McConnel and Thomson seem to be in considerable confusion about its fate. Thomson (1936: 380) states that the pendant is "carried as a token or charm by the individual whose name the child has taken." In this case Thomson is referring to the nhampa kuutana. In another article (1946: 160) he provides similar information: "The withered piece of the cord is carried at first by the mother, but is presented later with the child, to its *namp kort'n*." However, McConnel (1953: 11) notes that the "baby's umbilical cord...is hung round a baby's neck when it is presented to its father, on the occasion of the mother's return to her husband's camp after childbirth." (See also McConnel 1953: 33). Elsewhere (1957: 140-1) McConnel presents an account given by an informant, possibly from the Watson River, stating that the pendant is worn by the child when it is presented to its namesake. However, this presentation does not occur until the child "is running about and learning to speak". Moreover the namesake, who is decided by manipulation of the cord, is stated as standing in the relationship of father's younger brother to the child.

(c) Post-natal period:

Properly speaking, much of this confusing information relates to the post-natal period. The contradictions inherent within the data are probably irresolvable without further fieldwork. Later I shall suggest that the data may reflect sub-regional variations. Moreover, the data on the assignation of "navel names" coincides poorly with actual practice among the Kugu-Nganychara (see Chapter 10). However, before returning to these questions I wish to take up the matter of post-natal food restrictions. McConnel notes that food restrictions are placed on the child's MB- and F immediately after the birth (see the passage already quoted under Labour and delivery). We have already observed that, according to Thomson, food restrictions commence, for both F and M, at the moment the pregnancy is recognized; he does not specify MB- as a person to whom restrictions ever apply (see the discussion under Pre-natal period). In Myths of the Muŋkan (1957: 135), McConnel records that, after the birth, the mother eats root foods and the husband is confined to small fish. In another story, the husband and wife again eat root food, but avoid fish altogether for the first five days; then the husband begins to eat immature fish while the woman remains restricted to root foods (138).

It is reasonably clear from McConnel's and Thomson's data that there are two ceremonies affecting the child after birth: the presentation to the nhampa kuutana ("navel name"); and the presentation to father. What is not clear is the order in which these presentations occur. The issue is complicated by the fact that in some cases the child's nhampa kuutana and father may be the one and the same person.

(1) Presentation to nhampa kuutana:

Thomson (1946: 164-5) gives a detailed report of a presentation which took place at Cape Keerweer and involved "members of the Wik

Monkan and Wik Alkan Tribes". There can be little doubt that the Wik-Mungkana referred to here are members of one or more local groups, the territories of which lie on or near the coast in the vicinity of Cape Keerweer rather than Archer River people (See the dialect language survey in Chapter 1)[1].

There is little point in reproducing Thomson's description here. However, it is worth noting that McConnel (1957: 140-1) describes what appears to be a similar ceremony.[2] Unfortunately, although McConnel names her informants she does not specify their local group affiliation. Consequently, there is no certainty that her account, any more than Thomson's, refers properly to the Archer River area. McConnel's and Thomson's accounts differ in some respects. Thomson's is based on actual observation; McConnel relies on an informant's description. In his account, Thomson

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1. Thomson, however, specifies that "The ceremony occurs also in Wik ŋätärra and neighbouring Wik tribes" (164). It is difficult to know how much faith may be placed in this statement, given Thomson's failure to acknowledge (or, perhaps, even realize) that the Wik-Mungkana to whom he refers do not belong to any "inland tribe" but in fact reside on the coast, and to his separation of Wik-Alkanha and Wik-Ngatharra into two separate "tribes" when, in fact, they simply constitute alternative names for the same language (or dialect). (It may also be worth mentioning in this connexion that in an account of an actual birth given to Thomson (1936: 379-80) the "navel name" assigned on that occasion was Pamalkan, a name which belongs to a prominent Wik-Alkanha (or Wik-Ngatharra) local group. It may be that Thomson gathered all his data relating to child birth and the presentation to (nhampa) kuutana during the events surrounding a birth which occurred in the Cape Keerweer area. Consequently, some caution should be exercised in accepting his account of the actual birth as applying to the Archer River.

   Thomson's photographs of the presentation (1946: Plates VI-VII) are obviously taken on the beachfront.

2. Although McConnel fails to refer to the term kuutana or nhampa kuutana, it is clear from the context that the man to whom the child is presented stands in the kuutana or "navel cord" relationship to the child.

indicates that the child is carried by a man who is both FFB and MMB+ to the child, and who pretends to make the child walk; in McConnel's report the child is crawling (i.e., on the verge of walking), if not "running about and learning to speak", and it is carried by its MM. The reason, McConnel says, is that the mother herself cannot present the child for she stands in the relationship of B+W to the child's namesake, and he is therefore tabu. In Thomson's version the tabu is ostensibly for a different reason, viz., the child and its parents are all said to be *ngaintja* (ngaynycha) or "tabu" to the nhampa kuutana, and vice versa. Prohibitions on speaking and on giving or receiving food have applied since the child took his name. It is notable that in both accounts it is the parallel grandparents (real or classificatory) of the child who are free from restrictions.

Despite the differences which exist between the accounts, the latter agree on a number of points:

(1) The child is painted in red and white ochre.

(2) The mother makes a presentation of maya (i.e., vegetable food, including honey) to the child's kuutana, placing it on the ground beside him.

(3) The child is laid face down on the kuutana's stomach. The kuutana then apparently sits up and rubs "underarm smell"[1] on the child. Thomson's account provides several additional details:

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1. This expression is in current usage at Edward River and Aurukun. Because it properly puts the stress on smell rather than simply the perspiration itself, I shall continue to use this Aboriginal English gloss throughout the text. Thomson (1946: 164) notes that the WM. term is "*yuan porntjil: yuan,* the axilla, *porntjil,* smell".

> (The kuutan)...held the child in his arms and sat up. He took sweat from under his armpits...and rubbed it on the joints of the child's arms and legs...Next he rubbed his axillary sweat on the child's forehead...; on its thigh bone...and then on its knees...and elbow joints...Finally he took each of these joints in turn in his mouth pretending to bite them. (1946: 164)

Thomson reports that the purpose of rubbing on the "underarm smell" is twofold: firstly, it lifts the restrictions which have applied between the child and its (nhampa) kuutana, i.e., the child is no longer ngaynycha; and secondly, it is intended to make the child strong. This second function appears to receive support within Thomson's description from the fact that the kuutana pretends to bite the child's joints. The procedure evokes the common practice of straightening spear shafts using the teeth as a vice.

(4) In Thomson's account, the piece of umbilical cord, enclosed in a decorative casing, is presented to the (nhampa) kuutana. McConnel records that the decorated piece of cord is worn by the child. Thomson omits to tell his readers how the cord is transferred to the (nhampa) kuutana, and it is nowhere visible in any of the photographs which accompany his article (Thomson 1946). Conversely, McConnel fails to indicate whether the cord is transferred to the (nhampa) kuutana or not.

It seems reasonable to assume that these are in fact simple oversights and that the cord does pass into possession of the (nhampa) kuutana. Thomson (1946: 165) usefully points out that if the (nhampa) kuutana "should die, his wife does not carry the *kort'n* of the child but returns it to the parents. The fate of the child is to some extent linked with that of the *kort'n* [as cord (JvS)] and the people believe that if it were burned the child would become sick."

At the end of her account McConnel makes the additional comment that, in the event of the husband's death, the child would

be adopted by his FB-. It is not clear, however, whether the FB- would adopt his B+C because he stands in the relationship of kuutana to him, or because it is customary for a man to take over the responsibilities of his older brother at the latter's death. Thomson (1946: 160, 163-4) records that people standing in a kuutana relationship enjoy a special bond which lasts throughout their lives. Perhaps in the case to which McConnel alludes, the responsibilities incurred under both relationships simply overlap.

(2) Presentation to father:

In the case of the presentation to father, Thomson (1936: 383) describes a ceremony which he locates explicitly on the Archer River. McConnel (1957: 136-39) records a myth which contains a lengthy account of what is apparently the same ceremony. From a reference to Kolet'auwa (kolet-awa) within her text (p. 139), it is fairly certain that the events described are believed to have occurred on the Watson River. Kolet-awa is located on the western bank of the Watson River, just below its junction with Merkunga Creek.[1]

Again, there is little point in reproducing their accounts in detail. The evidence in both accounts suggests that the presentation represents the first time the father sees his child. That is, it marks the end of the mother's period of seclusion. Moreover, the ceremony seems to take place quite soon after the birth.[2] Thomson

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1. On the same evidence it may be argued that McConnel's description of the presentation of the child to its nhampa kuutana, referred to earlier, also relates to the Watson-Archer Rivers area.

2. There are general grounds, considering the bulk of the evidence, for believing that the order of the presentations should be treated in reverse, i.e., the presentation to father in fact precedes the presentation to the (nhampa) kuutana. However, McConnel, in a short passage which presents a summarized version of the two presentations, has the presentation to MB- (which I interpret as the presentation to nhampa kuutana) clearly taking precedence over the presentation to father (1934: 318).

(p. 382) indicates that the mother may be quite weak; however, McConnel (p. 138) refers to the resumption of the menstrual flow. This could normally be expected to resume only after some months. This is not the only problem in McConnel's text. Although the child is presented to its father, the account specifies that the mother "breaks off the navel cord...fastens a beeswax pendant to it, striped with strips of yellow orchid bark, and ties the cord round the baby's neck, ready for its father." This, of course, is strongly reminiscent of the procedures involved in the presentation of the child to its (nhampa) kuutana. Earlier in the story, the mother delivers her own child, and manipulates the cord herself, calling the name of her husband as the placenta is delivered. In this case, the nhampa kuutana and the father are the one and the same person. In short, there is no need for a double presentation.

By and large, however, the presentation bears the hallmarks of the presentation to father. In both Thomson's and McConnel's accounts the child is presented by the mother; the father sits upright (and cross-legged) and the child is placed in his lap; and the mother sits (kneeling) in front of him. While McConnel's text only refers to three participants in the ceremony, viz., the mother, the father, and the child, Thomson's account also refers to M, MMM, FB+, FZ+ and FZ-. In a photograph (Plate 8, facing p. 382), the father and relations drawn from these categories sit in a formal arrangement. Close male agnates of the child (F, FB+ and FB-) sit on the left of the photograph. Close female agnates

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2. (Cont) McConnel's data are so confusing that it is difficult to know which to trust and which to abandon. My reason for treating the presentations in the order I have chosen does not reflect my faith in this short passage. Rather, it has appeared to me necessary to sort out the allocation of the "navel name" and the nature of the kuutana relationship before proceeding to other questions.

(FZ+ and FZ-) sit on the right. To the extreme right sits the child's MM. Of course, the latter may also be an agnate, either real or classificatory. Thomson (p. 382) refers to these relations as päm kämpän. It might be thought that this term in fact refers to agnates. (I shall return to this issue in Chapter 10). The only non-agnate mentioned, other than mother, is the father's mother. Significantly it is she who attends the mother. Moreover, Thomson also indicates that it is the mother's mother's mother who more often attends on the mother. Thus, there appears to be a sharp division between agnates and non-agnates (M, FM, MMM). In Thomson's and McConnel's terms the ceremony would appear to mark the incorporation of the child into its father's patriclan.[1]

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1. Needham (1962b: 255-6) makes much of this same photograph, attempting to correlate the division between right and left with a division, in the first instance, between male and female, and, in the second instance, between seniority and juniority. While the division between the sexes is clear enough (and normal enough in the Wik region) the other division is poorly supported by Thomson's data. Perhaps more importantly the arrangement can be interpreted as representing the centrality of the father. If the latter were in fact located at the centre of the photograph instead of to one side the true arrangement may have been clearer. The women would be seen clearly as sitting off to one side, with the woman most genealogically distant from the child sitting at the greatest remove from the father. Various avoidance patterns (and friendship ties) might more usefully be invoked to account for the details of the seating arrangements within the two groups of siblings than simple binary oppositions.

   Nor does he need to place any particular value on the fact that the mother circles the father in "a counterclockwise circumambulation" (p. 256). Circling movements are common in many ritual contexts in Wik society, notably in dancing. In circling movements, (male) dancers always proceed in a counterclockwise direction. This may have symbolic significance. If so, it has a generality the character of which has never been explained to me, but which clearly has nothing to do with male-ness or female-ness. On the other hand, it may be no more important than the clockwise or anticlockwise direction taken by water in proceeding down a plughole.

   Needham could not be expected to be aware of the pervasiveness of counterclockwise circling in Wik society. However, he is guilty of a simple and avoidable error in reporting. He refers to the "mother of the child's mother (seated) to the left" in the photograph (p. 256). In his text Thomson (p. 382) speaks (cont.)

This last statement leads us directly into the question of personal naming. We have already examined the assignation of kuutana or "navel names". McConnel and Thomson between them make two important points with respect to the latter: firstly, McConnel (1957: 139) points to the fact that the procedure of manipulating the cord places the midwife in a position where she may effectively determine the name which is assigned; secondly, Thomson (1946: 160) indicates that "the nämp kort'n need not necessarily be a family or clan name but that it may come from an outside group." Thomson states the reason poorly, viz., that the names called need not be "restricted to one moiety". He means simply that the names of non-agnates may be assigned. Neither writer suggests why this may occur. It could be argued easily that the midwife - FM, MM, MZ+, M or HM - may be interested in linking the child in a formal sense with her own clan (retaining McConnel's and Thomson's terminology for the moment). However, neither McConnel nor Thomson discuss sufficient actual cases for this suggestion to be pursued in any meaningful way. In the one case discussed by Thomson in any detail (1946: 161) he makes no mention of the midwife.

While the nhampa kuutana or navel name is the first to be assigned, it is not, according to Thomson, "the most important" (1946: 160). Children also receive two other personal names: *namp pi'in* (nhampa pi'ana; nhampa - name, pi'ana - big) and nhampa manya (manya - small,little). When and how are these names applied?

The first part of this question is difficult to answer.

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1. (Cont) of the "mother's mother's" as the woman who often attends the mother (instead of HM, as it is in this case). His caption to the photograph refers, not to MMM, but specifically to "Mother's mother *of the child*" (my italics).

McConnel (1934: 318) seems to indicate that the names are assigned when the child is presented to its father. She writes that the father 'accepts the child as a member of his clan. A name is "called" for the child, usually in order of age and precedence, by a member of his own clan, male or female respectively, according to the sex of the child.' She adds that 'The child is "put along" that totem'. The name is, to use McConnel's expression, a "totemic name". In receiving it the child is, according to McConnel "received into the clan, comes under the protection of the *pulwaiya*, and acquires the hunting rights and privileges of its father's clan."[1] It should be clear that McConnel was not at this time (1934) aware that the child received more than one name. Certainly she does not mention "big names" or "small names", any more than she refers to "navel names". Nor, despite Thomson's treatment of the subject in detail (1946), does she ever seem to become aware of the fact. In Myths of the Mungkan (1957) she continues to confuse the three categories of names (see, especially, her commentary on the bottom of p. 139). This confusion, perhaps more than anything else, probably accounts for the difficulties in reconciling her and Thomson's data over the previous few pages.

For his part, Thomson gives no indication of when the "big

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1. In a somewhat contradictory note, she writes: "I am doubtful as to how far the child is actually adopted by a totem before the age of puberty." The situation is less baffling if it can be understood that the child is already identified with a "totem" or "estate" even before birth, simply by virtue of its link with its father. McConnel is merely signalling the obvious fact that although a child's social (or as I prefer to call it in this case, existential) identity pre-exists (for it can only be the child of its father from whom its identity is transmitted), the process of incorporation within that identity takes place progressively throughout its life. Conception is one moment in the incorporation; naming is another. Later, initiation ceremonies may serve to re-confirm the identity.

name" and the "small name" are assigned, except that they come after the assignation of the nhampa kuutana. Moreover, he does not really address himself to the problem of what the terms "big" (pi'ana) and "little" (manya) really mean in the context of naming. Thomson does raise, admittedly in a rather incidental fashion, what may turn out to be a parallel usage, viz., these terms may also be used in conjunction with kin terms. He writes (1946: 163, note 2):

> *Pi'in* means merely "big", but used with *kat* (mother) i.e. *kat pi'in*, it means own (physiological) mother, as distinct from *kat manya*, little mother, the mother's younger sister. When used with a personal name, e.g. *Tippunt*, the kinship term is understood.

When attached to a kin term, pi'ana or "big" appears to indicate that the term is used in its primary sense. On the other hand, manya or "little" bears the suggestion that the term is used in a derived sense. In the case of *kat manya* (derived from kaatha, which has, as its primary denotatum, mother), the directionality of the derivation involves a notion of juniority as well as common sex. It would be interesting to establish whether the same principles apply in the case of "big names" and "little names".

This discussion raises a subsidiary point. In the case of the nhampa kuutana, Thomson (1946: 162) states explicitly that either the "big name" or the "small name" may be used. However, he suggests no reason why the woman manipulating the umbilical cord would choose one of the other series of terms.

Thomson, like McConnel, avoids specifying the kin who are involved in deciding the "big" and "little" names. However, the two ethnographers agree on one point, viz., that the names derive from "clan totems" (See Thomson, 1946: 159-60, 161). Thomson (1946: 161) notes that the names are sex-specific, i.e., there is a special

set of names for men, and a special set of names for women. McConnel makes the same point without stating it explicitly (See, for example, 1957: 3-9, 11-12). Thomson (1946: 162) argues that the "big name" comes from "the head or the head end of the totem", and that the "small name" comes from "the legs, tail, or tail end of an animal". (I shall examine this argument in Chapter 11). Thomson further argues (1946: 159) that these names are not really personal names; they are "really group names and signify membership of, and solidarity with, a totemic group...." It would seem then that each "totemic group" would only require four names: one "big name" and one "little name" for the men; and one "big name" and one "little name" for the women. If this were so, an apparent gap in Thomson's and McConnel's data would disappear. There would be no need for special procedures to assign these names if in fact they were assigned automatically. There is evidence in Thomson to support this argument. For the Bonefish "clan" Thomson (1946: 162) lists only four names, thus fulfilling the minimal requirements of the paradigm as outlined above. However, elsewhere his information is more open to conjecture. In one place (p. 161) he makes reference to "the usual *namp pi'in* of the women", and to "*Tippunt* - usually the *namp many'* - the little name - of *Wallkall'n* women". Moreover, he indicates that in certain circumstances "little names" may be converted into "big names", just as the latter (and the former) may become "navel names". In addition, Thomson (p. 161) records that the "big name" may also be referred to as "*namp pip, namp piny'* or *namp pola*", i.e., the name of F, FZ+ (/FB+),[1] and FF respectively. It is clear from his account

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1. The kin term piny' (WM. pinya) includes both FB+ and FZ+ among its denotata (See, for example, Thomson 1972: 16). Thomson does not indicate clearly whether the term *namp piny'* (nhampa pinya) is meant to refer to FB+ or to FZ+, or to both. From the rest of his argument it is fairly certain that he intends it to refer to FZ+.

that girls "follow" or take their names from their pinya (FZ+). By implication, boys "follow" their F and/or FF (and/or FB+). What remains obscure is whether the names of F and FF (or perhaps of other male agnates) must be the same, or may in fact vary. It seems possible that there may be some optation. I have already indicated that the assignation of the "navel name" signals a special relationship between the child and its nhampa kuutana. It may be that the assignation of particular "big names" (and "small names") may similarly establish or confirm a special relationship between a child and a particular agnate. Thomson talks vaguely of clan solidarity. However, McConnel's data include multiple names for many of the "clans" (e.g., McConnel 1957: 3-9, 11-12). It is difficult to account for these data unless there is a range of "big names", or, at the very least, a range of "small names" among which choices can be made (cf. the passage on the calling of names in McConnel 1957: 140). This would make sense of the proliferation of labels adduced by Thomson, although they could be interpreted as circumlocutions which in fact have the force of "clan name". Why this should be so when Thomson himself provides a simpler expression for referring to clans, e.g., *Wallkal'n Korp'n* (wal-kalana kuupana; wal-kalana - "bonefish", kuupana - "holder"), "bonefish clan", is not clear. It seems safer to conclude, at the moment, that although Thomson (p. 161) indicates that the "big names" and "small names" are "inherited directly" there is possibly a range of choices open. Thomson (p. 161) lends incidental support to this conclusion in referring to 'Pampikan..., *one* (my italics) of the important "big names" of *Wallkall'n Korp'n*...' Largely on the basis of McConnel's data, coupled with these one or two hints in Thomson's discussion, I am obliged to conclude that his claim that clan members hold their personal names in common represents

an inadequate formulation. It ignores the fact that there is a multiplicity of names, that there is consequently room for choice and therefore individuation, and, finally, that the names have, at one point in time, been invented. It is significant in this respect that both McConnel and Thomson believe that the names are analysable. This, in turn, suggests that the names do not have a lengthy provenance. Consequently, there might be some expectation that the mechanisms whereby new names come into being can be uncovered. We could further anticipate that, in performing this task, we would become at least partially aware of clan dynamics. I shall return to these issues in Chapter 11.

Before proceeding to the next life crisis I wish to retrace my steps a little in order to take up the question of food restrictions. I have already noted that McConnel and Thomson present somewhat contradictory accounts of the food restrictions which apply during the immediate post-natal period. In the discussion of the presentations to both the nhampa kuutana and the father, we have observed the lifting of food (and speech) restrictions.

In a general sense, Thomson (1936: 37a) notes that the food restrictions on the mother are lifted progressively as the child grows older, though he defines the stages at which they terminate somewhat ambiguously. He remarks that when the child commences to walk all food restrictions (including those on "old male wallaby or kangaroo") are lifted, with the exceptions of those on emu and plain turkey (Australian Bustard). However, he continues: "The tabus on the eating of most of the birds named above are removed gradually as the child grows, the last being on the eating of emu, the turkey and the jabiru, which remain in force until the child

is able to speak properly..." These remarks are difficult to unravel. They make sense only if "the birds named above" include scrub fowl, scrub turkey, Burdekin duck and black duck (referred to on p. 378), that the restrictions on eating them in fact remain after the child has commenced to walk (in direct contradiction to what Thomson states is the case), and, finally, if jabiru is also included with emu and plain turkey as a species still forbidden after the child begins to walk. Thomson says little about the lifting of restrictions on the father, except that the restriction on eating wallabies and kangaroos killed by a wild dingo applies "until after the child walks, and until it is able to speak well." He also indicates that the man may "not eat rock cod or...two kinds of stingrays"; however, it is not clear from his remarks whether these restrictions apply until after the child learns to walk and to talk, or not. Nowhere in his account is there any indication that food restrictions may also apply to the child.

(2) Betrothal - the "promise" system:

Among the Archer River people McConnel (1934: 341-2) reports a system of betrothal whereby a prospective mother-in-law promises her daughter to a prospective son-in-law. McConnel provides two different descriptions of the "promise" ritual. In one (1934: 341) the mother-in-law simply "paints the prospective son-in-law's chest with white clay, as a symbol of her contract." In the other (1953: 18) she provides the following account:

> A small plain ring...is used in the betrothal ceremony as a symbol of the promise made by the woman to give her daughter in marriage to a man. In this ceremony her head is covered with a sheet of bark (on account of the strict taboo existing between son-in-law and mother-in-law), as, accompanied by another woman (acting as proxy for the promised daughter) she encircles the man seated on the ground and places the ring over a tuft of his hair and bangs a dillybag over his head. The betrothal ring is kept by the

> man as a surety for his promised bride. When the marriage takes place the ring is placed under honey in a bark vessel, as the last payment due to future mother- and father-in-law.

Although she in no way suggests that this description does not concern Archer River people (or, more generally, the Wik-Mungkana), it may be that it applies more properly to the Kaanychu on the upper Archer River. (See McConnel 1934: 341, note 8).

McConnel (1934: 342) indicates that "The contract is rigid and binding, and is kept in mind by the constant observance of taboos of speech and sight and all other forms of intimacy. Neither [the mother-in-law nor the son-in-law] will approach the other's camp whilst the other is present." McConnel argues that this pattern of avoidance itself has symbolic value, "for if a man wants a certain girl for his wife he will obviously avoid her mother and give presents to her father." In this way the man can indicate his desire for the formal betrothal to occur.

McConnel (1934: 342) also makes the rather impenetrable remark that the betrothal is sometimes ritually enacted "as a courtesy, even when no bride is forthcoming and the marriage has little chance of ever taking place". What she appears to point to, by this remark, is that girls may be "promised" before they are born. In these circumstances, obviously, there can be no certainty that the "promised" wife will ever be born. She writes: "Once such a promise has been made, even though the woman remains childless for years, the taboos are rigorously observed and obligatory food dues are paid." Avoidance patterns are maintained; and the prospective son-in-law remains "under an obligation not to receive food from his parents-in-law-by-promise."

I shall take up the question of marriage rules and the categories of kin involved in the betrothals in the next chapter (under Marriage). For the moment it is worth recording McConnel's additional point that betrothals are often renewed at the uchanama ceremony (see the next section of this present chapter, i.e., Initiation/rites de passage).

(3) Initiation/rites de passage:

McConnel treats the major rites de passage of the Archer River people in a very cursory fashion, although she does describe some of the dances which form part of these ceremonies and records some of the relevant mythology (See Appendix B).[1] Thomson avoids ceremonial life entirely.

McConnel notes that there are two rites de passage, utyanam (uchanama) (1934: 336-7) and wintyanam (winychanama) (1934: 337). The uchanama, or first-degree ceremony, shares many features in common with similar ceremonies elsewhere in Australia. Youths are generally initiated at puberty; there is a formal separation of the youths from the women; restrictions are applied to the youths on speaking to or on receiving food directly from the women; and the restrictions are formally lifted at the conclusion of the ceremony. (See McConnel's brief description, 1934: 336-7).

Winychinama constitutes the second-degree ceremony. McConnel (1934: 337) indicates that the ceremony "may last over a period of two years, during which the Utyana are not allowed to give food to any women, but must hand over all they get in the hunt to the older

1. I have already noted that McConnel does not distinguish clearly between so-called "increase ceremonies" and dances performed within the context of the rites de passage.

men." At the conclusion of this period the initiate is considered eligible to marry.

McKnight (1975: 93-4) adds details which further align the ceremonies with similar ceremonies elsewhere in Australia. He notes the death-rebirth symbolism built into the ceremonies, the "swallowing" of the initiates by a "snake", and their residence inside the "snake's belly." He also treats the antagonism between the old and young men; the threats of punishment; the revelation of dances, bullroarers, and other "sacred" objects; and the use of trickery within the ceremony.[1]

From the brief accounts available in the literature there is almost nothing on any of the sociological dimensions of ceremonial life, and no discussion of the environmental conditions in which the ceremonies occur. Who organizes the ceremonies? Are there any prior arrangements made with close kin of the initiates-to-be? Is their permission sought? Who looks after the initiates during the ceremony? Who performs the dances or instructs the initiates? Are any payments made to the organizers? Who settles disputes which arise during the ceremonies? What is the relationship between "ceremonial" organization and "totemic" organization? At what time of the year are ceremonies held? What is the resource base? Who produces the food, and how is it distributed? Where are the ceremonies held? Are they site-specific (i.e., always held at the same site)? Or may they occur at any site provided it can provide sufficient

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1. McKnight's main intention is to explain the presence of flying foxes as symbols within the ceremonies, as part of a general discussion of the "odd structure attributed to female flying foxes" (1975: 91) by the so-called Wik-Mungkana. I do not propose to take up these issues or other matters relating to symbolic usages within this thesis.

food for the (presumably) large number of people involved? How many people attend? From what range are they drawn? How regularly do the ceremonies occur? These and similar questions are steadfastly ignored.

(4) Menstruation:

For a woman the first menstruation marks a major transition, perhaps equivalent, in some respects, to the first-degree ceremony undertaken by young pubescent males (See McConnel 1934: 317; 1953: 15, 317). Given the betrothal system where older men are often promised young girls (sometimes yet to be born), it is the custom, McConnel (1934: 316-17) reports, "for a man to take quite small girls ... under his charge, in order to assert his claims and prevent interference from other suitors". However, it is not until her first period that the girl is considered "marriageable". McConnel (1934: 317) writes:

> It was clearly stated to me that a girl did not act as a wife in the full sense before the age of puberty ... At her first period she is taken apart by her mother, who has so far always accompanied her. At the end of her period she dons a string apron for the first time, and taking an offering of food and yams, is brought to her husband's fire. She has now reached maturity ... - and ready to be a wife.

(5) Tooth avulsion and other bodily operations:

Thomson (1935b: 464) refers to tooth avulsion ("the removal of the right or left upper central incisor"). He notes that it "takes place in both sexes after puberty, is not an initiation rite, but is associated with dream life and life after death."

Thomson does not indicate the precise age at which the operation is performed, or who performs it. Nor, for example, does he provide such details as how the extracted tooth is disposed of.

McConnel makes brief reference to other bodily operations which seem to be basically for purposes of personal decoration. Both men and women wear "shell nosepegs" (McConnel 1953: 15). This would involve piercing of the nasal septum. Men (but not women) wear "a large hollow ear-cylinder (painted red and white and worn in the lobe of one ear, which is stretched to hold it)" (McConnel 1953: 15, see Plate 1,a). There are no references in either Thomson or McConnel to body cicatrices, though they appear clearly in photographs (for example, see, McConnel 1953: Plate 11,b (shoulder); Plate VI,a (chest), and c (shoulder).

(6) Marriage:

Marriage on the Archer River is attended with little ceremonial activity. McConnel (1934: 316) writes:

> ... The girl is ordered by her parents or brothers to build a fire on her side of the camp and to sit down beside it. The man to whom she is betrothed is then told by his older brothers or father to cross over from his side of the camp, taking his spears with him, and join the girl at her fire. After being urged for some time, he finally takes up his spears, walks across, and lays them down by the girl's fire, sits down by her and remains there for the night. In the morning he rejoins his camp and goes hunting, whilst the girl goes with her women folk to dig for yams, *etc.* In the evening she again makes her fire and cooks her yams, whilst the man returns to the single men's camp on his own side. Once more he is urged by his men folk, and is even pushed by them. If still reluctant, the girl's brothers will cross over to reassure him and tell him to have no fear. Finally, he takes up his spears and the fish or game he has procured, walks across and joins the girl at her fire. They partake of the evening meal, she providing the vegetable food and he the meat, as is customary in married life. The sharing of each other's food, sleeping by the same fire, the protection of his spear - in the sight of and with the consent of relatives on both sides - constitutes the social recognition of marriage. Next morning, as man and wife, they go hunting together, and in the evening camp together without further urging. The woman may now join her husband's side of the camp, and in future become a part of his local group, unless she should leave him for another husband.

There are several issues which remain unexplained in this account, or are simply ignored. One omission is the failure to consider the question of co-wives. More seriously, it is puzzling to find the parents, the male siblings, as well as other kin of both spouses present in the same campsite. These data fit poorly with the conventional account of local organization apparently accepted by both McConnel and Thomson. This obvious lack of congruence passes unremarked. The reader has no knowledge of whether the marriage occurs on the estate of the husband's father or on that of the wife's father, or elsewhere. There is simply reference to the prospective husband's "side of the camp" (in one place the "single men's camp", and in another, because his wife joins him there, clearly not the "single men's camp"!) and "her side of the camp."

McConnel returns to the conventional position in arguing that the wife "may ... in future become a part of his local group ..." This may appear to resolve the issue in part for it bears the suggestion that the husband's familial kin have travelled with him to join, in temporary fashion, his prospective wife's residential group. However, in this case it is impossible to determine whether McConnel's account is based on actual observations and represents a statement of normative behaviour, or is in fact a text or a compilation of several texts given to her by informants. In the first case her account would be at the level of a statistical model but for which the statistical basis is not provided; in the second case, the account is at the level of a mechanical model, but a mechanical model which is not tested against actual cases (see Levi-Strauss 1963: 283-89 for a discussion of this distinction between mechanical and statistical models).

(7) Death:

McConnel devotes a paper to Mourning ritual among the tribes of Cape York Peninsula (1937). Although she draws on information "from tribes occupying the lower Batavia, Embley, Archer, Kendall-Holroyd and Edward Rivers...", she relies chiefly on "the Wikmunkan tribe" (p. 346). She confines her attention essentially to the questions of disposal, mourning behaviour, and attendant mythology and beliefs. Although these questions are treated in detail, a number of important matters are left to one side: viz., the causes of death, from both an emic and etic perspective; sorcery; and the precise relationship between "body" and "spirit". I shall return to these issues in Chapter 10, in discussing death among the Kugu-Nganychara.

(a) Disposal of the body

The usual mode of disposing of the body was by mummification with final disposal through cremation. The Kaanychu, who occupy the upper Archer River, initially dispose of the body through burial, but later exhume the bones and carry them about in a bark bundle. McConnel (1937: 349) suggests that the Wik-Mungkana on the Archer River occasionally practised interment, particularly in the case of old people. However, she does not state specifically that where burial was practised the bones were exhumed.[1]

McConnel (1937: 346-8) notes that ritual consumption of the

1. It is worth noting that McConnel (1937: 349) herself states that at the time she conducted fieldwork on the Archer River, burial was encouraged by the mission authorities at Aurukun. I should also add that police based in Coen carried out patrols through the bush and required the burial of mummified bodies they encountered in bush camps.

flesh of the deceased was practised in other parts of Cape York Peninsula, and that there was some inconclusive evidence that it may have occurred, at one time, at the mouth of the Love River (her Tokali River). However, on the evidence available to her, she concludes that "the consumption of the flesh of dead relatives" did not exist on the west coast of the Peninsula between the Batavia and the Edward Rivers.[1]

(i) Mummification (primary disposal):

McConnel (1937: 350) provides a brief description of the process:

> When a person dies a hole is made in the side of the body, and the internal organs are removed and buried. The corpse is then placed on a platform supported on four forked sticks... A fire is lit underneath the corpse to dry it. When the body is dried and sufficiently shrunken, it is wrapped around with sheets of tea-tree bark and fastened with strong twine or rope made from strands of fibre stripped from the roots of the wild fig-tree or wattle.

In another passage (1937: 351), she notes that the internal organs are removed by brothers of the deceased; the latter also light the fires which serve to dry out the corpse. There is no discussion as to who maintains the fires.

(ii) Disposal of personal effects and suppression of personal names:

Immediately after the death, the camp is deserted, and the bark shelter in which the deceased lived and, with it, all personal belongings are destroyed (McConnel 1937: 357). One exception would

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1. Information given to me by a Linngithiɣ - speaker, from the coast north of the Archer River, indicates that ritual consumption did occur in that area. However, my informant stressed that this practice served to distinguish his "mob" from people living on or south of the Archer River.

appear to be the umbilical cord of any person standing in the relationship of nhampa kuutana to the deceased (See Birth). However, the fate of the cord of the person who has died remains unclarified. According to McConnel these various practices are linked with the difficulty of separating the dead from the living.

In addition, all personal names of the deceased are placed under immediate restriction (McConnel 1957: 139; Thomson 1946: 163). Thomson indicates that the restriction extends to all personal names of the totemic group from which the deceased member of another group has acquired his "navel name": "... All the names for men and women, and even for dogs, associated with all the totems of the group or groups concerned, go into eclipse." Thomson (1946: 163) continues:

> When a man of the clan dies, his own name, and all other names associates with his totemic group, become *"körtimat"* and in the case of a woman, *nämparri*. All *min* and *mai* (animal and vegetable foods) associated with the totem are now *wätjämänn*. In addition, the sacred or tabu language ... is now used when referring to these people whose names are tabu, or to the foods which are *wätjämänn*.

Moreover, there is a special set of terms applied to people who stand in particular kin relationships with the deceased (Thomson 1946: 158-9). These replace the normal kin terms "temporarily as terms of address"; they are characterised by grouping together "under a single name ... a number of relatives who are distinguished normally by separate terms of relationship" (1946: 158; see also Scheffler's commentary in Thomson 1972: 39).

(iii) Widows and widowers:

A number of special restrictions are also imposed immediately on widows of the deceased. McConnel (1937: 351) records that "The widow (or widows) is left to sit crouched up under a piece of bark beside the body and must cry quietly there all night"; in the

daytime she "may leave the dead body and camp by herself, but she has to crawl on hands and elbows and must be covered over with a piece of bark." This lasts for three days during which time she may not eat, nor "speak to any of her husband's relatives." (In her account McConnel refers spefically only to the brother and the sister of the deceased; it is not clear whether close cognates, or only agnates, of the deceased are involved.)

After three nights the "husband's relatives" come and remove the bark; and in consultation with each other, the brother and the sister of the deceased may lift the food prohibition (McConnel 1937: 351-2). The widow may now accept root foods from her brothers. At the same time, "She wears plain string armlets and necklets, strings over the chest and covers herself with charcoal. She allows her hair to grow, plasters it with clay and charcoal, and fastens the end with beeswax (p. 352)." The food restrictions are lifted progressively:

> After three months the dead man's sister goes again to her brother and suggests that the widow may eat very small fish. If he consents, she takes small fish, rubs her sweat on it as before, and gives it to her to eat. The widow receives the fish in her mouth, but expels it. She may then eat small fish. After another month the same procedure is gone through with larger fish, after which she may eat fish as big as the lower part of one's arm. After another month and a repetition of the same ceremony she can eat big fish. After a whole year has passed meat is brought to her and the same ceremony gone through. After this she may eat certain kinds of meat (McConnel 1937: 352).

The lifting of restrictions on the widow is reminiscent of the lifting of restrictions on the mother after the birth of a child, not only in its progressive character but also with respect, in broad terms, to the foods which can be eaten: first root food, then small fish, followed by larger fish, and finally meat foods.

Apart from being subject to restrictions on speech and on eating, the widow, and her siblings, are obliged to make gifts of food to the father and to the siblings (i.e., agnates) of the deceased (p. 352). There is no precise indication when these gifts must commence; they terminate at the final disposal (q.v.). McConnel notes that they "are presented to the accompaniment of rhythmic movements and the singing of the mourning song...."

There are one or two issues which McConnel may fruitfully have pursued. One concerns possible correlations between stages in the mummification process and the application and the lifting of restrictions, beyond the conspicuous correlations at the commencement of primary disposal and the termination of secondary disposal (i.e., initial application, on the one hand, and final lifting, on the other). Perhaps more importantly, McConnel might have determined whether restrictions also applied to widowers; and, if so, whether they parallelled those which apply to widows.

(iv) Other mourners:

McConnel's discussion of the behaviour of other mourners is very confusing. While the widow attends the body, immediately after the death, "The sisters of the dead man, the wife's mother, and wife's brother's wives ... all come and perform the mourning dance around the body..."[1] However, it appears that McConnel may be guilty of a confusion in chronology. She gives details of the decorations worn by the dancers, including "head-bands made from the dead man's hair." It is difficult to understand how these decorations, some involving considerable time spent in manufacture,

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1. The mourning dances (and songs) referred to by McConnel are known in Wik-Mungkana as wuungka.

could be ready immediately after the death. The answer to this mystery is perhaps to be found in the photograph to which she refers her readers. It shows women "performing a mourning dance around the corpse of a dead male relative, which is to be cremated in the morning" (McConnel 1937: Plate 1,B). That is, her discussion applies to the events surrounding the secondary disposal (cremation), not the primary disposal (desiccation and mummification). Alternately, women's dancing may also be associated with the latter, but without decorations.

There are no specific references to male mourning behaviour. McConnel (p. 352) simply records that:

> Whenever mourners meet for the first time after the death of a common relative they sit together and mourn silently a while and then give vent to their feelings in a loud wailing in which other relatives in the camp may join.

McConnel adds that neglect of this procedure would constitute "an insult to the chief mourners." There is no indication in McConnel's account of whether special behaviours are required of particular consanguines, e.g., food avoidance, etc.

(v) Termination of primary disposal:

The initial disposal appears to be complete when the body is fully dried and wrapped in a bark bundle. According to McConnel (1937: 350), the body, which, until this time, has been located in a single campsite may now be moved from place to place:

> The body is carried about ... for an indefinite time, extending over two or three years, or sometimes even longer. It is kept in a quiet corner of the clan locality in charge of the widow, mother or other relative. When this person moves from one place to another the mummified corpse in its bark bundle is carried on the heads of two women, one at each end. When in camp the bundle rests on two forked sticks... Usually the widow or near relative remains on guard in the camp with the body during the day, but sometimes the women carry it with them on their daily

Following the orthodox version of local organization it appears that women remain as members of their husband's horde even after they are free to move about (with the encased body). The corpse remains in its clan territory. Moreover, McConnel is at pains to point out the strong association between the deceased (even in the form of the mummified body) and the awa of his clan's puul waya. McConnel records that mourning dances are performed whenever a corpse is present in the camp. These mourning dances take particular forms:

> Each mourning dance has its accompanying song and is usually a legacy from the age of hero-ancestors... For instance, a myth... of the Wikmunkan ghost clan describes the tragic end of an original ancestral pair, husband and wife, who assumed the form of ghosts at death, thus becoming the patrons of mourning rites. According to this myth, the widow sat weeping by the lagoon for her spouse who had gone down under, where he founded the sacred abiding place *(auwa)* of the ghost hero-ancestor *(pulwaiya)*. The song she sang is that which the women now sing when they mourn for their dead. (McConnel 1937: 353)

The implication is that each clan has its own mourning songs (and, therefore, dances).[1]

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1. In another passage McConnel (1937: 352-3) talks of the dances at the "tribal" rather than at the "clan" level:

> The Kendall River women extend their arms in a manner suggestive of the laying of a ghost... In some dances the women carry spear-throwers, while in the Wikmunkan dance they hold their ears.

With respect to the Kendall River, she is clearly talking of the coastal division, i.e., the lower river, for otherwise (if she were consistent) she would include the women among her "Wikmunkan." This is confirmed by the photograph to which she refers her readers (Plate IIA). It shows women dancing on the beach; and the caption makes explicit reference to "the Wiknatanya and Wiknatara tribes." The dance style is clearly apalacha, or the related Kendall River form, pucha.

Women carrying spear-throwers are shown in Plate IB; the caption reads: "Women of the Wikmunkan tribe, spear-thrower in hand, performing a mourning dance around the corpse of a dead male relative... (Photograph taken on the Archer River.)"

It is difficult then to know what McConnel means by "Wikmunkan" in the earlier quotation. The "Wikmunkan dance" she refers to

(cont.)

Consequently, whenever the women dance they are asserting the links between the deceased and his clan, and his clan estate. If we can talk of a "logic of mourning", it would seem to require both these symbolic linkages between the deceased and his clan estate, and their expression in concrete terms, i.e., by the retention of the body within the clan estate.

(vi) Cremation (secondary and final disposal):

McConnel (1937: 354) makes the important observation that:

> The duration of mourning depends chiefly upon the age, sex and social status of the deceased, as also upon the number of relatives who are prepared to support the claims of the deceased for social recognition, which involves the imposition of food taboos, presentation of food gifts and carrying out of the orthodox procedure of mummification and cremation.

The decision to end the period of mourning is made by the deceased person's father, brothers and sisters (McConnel 1937: 351,355). The decision is dependent upon their assessment that

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1. (Cont) is the frilled-necked lizard dance, and comes from the Ti-Tree area (Wik-Mungkana-speaking). People living now at Aurukun tell me that the lower of the two plates labelled IIA was photographed at Ti-Tree (wanka-neynga). It is possible that McConnel witnessed the frilled-necked lizard dance (wuungka) on this same occasion; however, the photograph depicts, among other things "...women...grouped around singing the mourning song. One woman bends over the corpse and symbolically gathers bush-nuts." It is possible that the song is a "bush-nut" song (See also 1937: 358). The "bush-nut" clan is situated on the Archer River (see Appendix B). This tends to confirm McConnel's statement that both photographs (Plate IA, and the one just described) were taken on the Archer River.

These confused data suggest that there are stylistic variations in wuungka throughout the Wik region; that these stylistic variations do not match the distribution of languages (i.e., there is no single Wik-Mungkana style); and that, within each style, there are individual and differentiable songs (and dances). (See Chapter 10 under Death.)

the "widow has mourned long enough and that she and her mother and sisters, who are assisting her, have done all that is required of them..." (McConnel 1937: 355). They also choose where the cremation will take place. The participants in the ceremony marking the final disposal of the body are all those "who are in any way associated with either the husband's or widow's family." McConnel (1937: 355) describes the gathering in the following terms:

> The widow and her family assisted by clan relatives are expected to collect meat, roots, honey, etc. for the feast. People come from all directions to the rendezvous and camp in the direction whence they came. The two inter-related families of mourners who belong to opposite moieties camp on opposite sides of the camp.

She continues (p. 355):

> The corpse rests on forked sticks at a little distance from the main camp and is in charge of the widow or mother and their brothers. Women relatives periodically leave the camp, dancing towards the corpse to the accompaniment of wailing and laments, and continue their mourning dance around the corpse ... During the last day and night the dancing, interspersed with wailing, continues incessantly, till by dawn on the day of cremation the thud of feet is weary and desperate and the voices are hoarse and shrill.

It is now that the women wear the decorations which McConnel referred to earlier. In a ceremony which McConnel witnessed on the Archer River in 1927, there was wrestling during the day between classificatory brothers. She is careful to specify in her account that the wrestling did not involve cross-cousins because it might lead to disputes; and she indicates that the atmosphere in which these events are conducted is likely to be tense. The body was guarded by M and MB of the deceased (1937: 356). After a day and a night of continuous dancing the occasion reached its climax:

> Towards dawn the whole camp joined in a wild wailing, both men and women taking part. Later the women, still crying and moving their bodies rhythmically to the song, carried the corpse in its bark bundle towards the pile of wood and laid it on the ground nearby. There the old mother threw herself down on

> the ground beside the body in a paroxysm of grief. The women continued singing the mourning song as they stood around the body. One woman bending down over the body reached down her hand with rhythmic movements as if gathering bush-nuts off the body of the deceased, and withdrew it again as if placing them in her dilly-bag, which was suspended from her head ... By this symbolic act she identified the corpse with the deceased's clan totem, the bush-nut. The men meanwhile stood opposite the women on the other side of the camp. The mother's brother and the brother of the deceased stood on guard by the pile of wood. Several of the men then came forward and lifted the corpse, bearing it to the pyre that had been prepared. A man then cut the string which bound the bark around the corpse in two places. At each cut a short sharp cry was uttered. The body was then laid on the pile of wood and a man standing by ready with a torch stepped forward and lit the bark. Immediately all the mourners turned their backs on the pyre, and as the flames consumed the body they burst into loud wails, contorting their faces, wringing their hands, and hitting their heads on the ground in a frenzy of grief (p. 356).

The cremation occurred on the estate of a clan which belonged, according to McConnel, to the same moiety as the deceased. The reason it was not held within the estate of the deceased's own clan is not given. As it was, a number of other "concessions" were made: the feast which was supposed to follow the cremation took place beforehand; consequently, the customary practice of stringing "the bones and feathers of the birds and animals consumed in the feast on poles" which are then erected over the body, was not carried out. The participants all had to return early to Aurukun (p. 357).

It is not totally clear from McConnel's account whether the final presentations of food to the family of the deceased by the widow and her family are those which constitute the food consumed at the feasting after the cremation, or not (McConnel 1937: 353-54). It would appear that they are. With the final presentations of food the last of the restrictions are lifted:

> The widow, who, as chief mourner, has kept her long hair fastened with beeswax and matted with clay and ashes, now has it shaved, and is released from her speech and food taboos. She passes into the care of her deceased husband's brother, who in most cases

> does not himself take her for his wife, but is responsible for finding her a husband - usually a clan "brother," sometimes a tribal "brother."
> (McConnel 1937: 354; cf. p. 357 where the mother is described as the chief mourner.)

The shaving of the hair is performed by the person receiving the food, probably a brother of the deceased. Relations between the two families are then said to be normalised. The last food taboo lifted from the widow is apparently on the eating of honey (McConnel 1937: 352); if food restrictions are not observed and lifted in the proper way it is believed that the widow will become ill and even die.

(vii) Disposal of spirit:

I have already noted that McConnel refers to the difficulty of separating the living from the dead. Her comments are vague, and she draws for examples, not on the Wik-Mungkana, but on the Kaanychu and the Ndra'angit (McConnel 1937: 357-58). However, it can be interpreted from her remarks that the Wik-Mungkana share similar anxieties. The notion of separating the living from the dead implies a dichotomy between body and spirit. Clearly there is a keen desire to maintain the corpse of the deceased in the camp; at the same time there appears to be an equally keen desire not to maintain the spirit of the deceased in the company of the living. Unfortunately, McConnel says nothing about the distinction (or the relation) between body and spirit, or about why there should be a desire to retain the one and to get rid of the other.

(viii) Spirit, puul waya and awa:

McConnel (1937: 358-60) stresses the close identification of the dead with their totems. In fact, McConnel proposes that the dead are transformed into the animals represented by the clan

awa. In the case of the ghost clan (centred on oonya-awa) there is no transformation into plants or animals; the ghosts are conceived of in human terms. At the awa, the puul waya and the spirits of the dead dwell together. On this basis McConnel (1937: 362-3) concludes:

> When one realizes that these clan *pulwaiya*, who are regarded as having originated the totemic species in the beginning, are but an idealized reflection of the clan forebears as such, i.e. parents and grandparents to whom the clan has looked for sustenance and instruction in the past, and who have been conceived as continuing after death to guard and protect the interests, and supply the needs, of their "children" one can then appreciate the significance of the close association between spirits of the dead and the *pulwaiya* at the *auwa*, whence these practical benefits are derived by ritual appeals. In fact one suspects that the dead eventually become the *pulwaiya*.

McConnel is undoubtedly correct; it is surprising only that she is so cautious in her conclusion.

Chapter 6 :

Intergroup relations and social dynamics: Archer River

In this chapter I wish to deal with two residual topics: marriage, and moieties. Both are contentious issues; both could be expected to shed some light on daily life on the Archer River, the first by providing details of actual marriage contracts, the second by focusing attention on the structure of ritual and other events. However, the Archer River people are presented as living in largely autonomous clans. Thus inter-group relations are minimized; and, as a consequence, it is difficult to talk about the Archer River as a single community.

As with other issues, in dealing with marriage, McConnel and Thomson tend to devote their attention to rules rather than to detailed analyses of actual case studies. The emphasis is on form rather than on content, on texts and informant categories rather than on observation. In this manner, social life is reduced to the mechanical re-enactment of established tradition.

As for moieties, they are introduced into discussion merely as shorthand heuristic devices. However, it is not certain from the literature that either McConnel or Thomson had any firm grasp of the concept, for they use the term vaguely and with variable meanings. Moreover, there is some dispute that named moieties in fact existed in the area under review.

As indicated in Chapter 1, McConnel and Thomson totally neglect issues such as conflict, peace-making, sorcery, social sanctions and decision-making. They are presented, to use Sharp's

expression (1958), as "people without politics". It is true that McConnel claims (1957: xxi) that, in the myths she collected from the Archer River people and others, "Nothing is omitted from their world of experience." While the claim is no doubt extravagant, the myths undoubtedly do contain a wealth of information, including, as she says, "the intimacies of family life, ... romances, quarrels, and fights, the punishments for disobedience to tribal law", and so on. However, she begs a number of questions. Firstly, how legitimate is it to extrapolate from mythological accounts for real life? Secondly, and this issue has been raised repeatedly, to what extent can informants' accounts of themselves serve as a substitute to independent observation? These questions do not invalidate a close scrutiny of the myths themselves. However, their detailed analysis must be left to a later study.

At another level, the literature contains a wealth of material on inter-personal behaviour, including avoidance and joking relationships, and the use of a special avoidance language (referred to by Wik people as "one-side talk"). However, this material also falls somewhat outside the scope of the present work; and, in any case, the approach has been to identify specific kin-based behaviours, rather than to locate these particular behaviours within the total social universe. Consequently, the explanations offered for particular practices bear a strongly contingent character.

Reviewing the discussion thus far, it would appear that the title of this chapter is something of a misnomer. However, I have deliberately retained it, firstly, to stress what is probably the major shortcoming of the literature on the Archer River people, and secondly, to retain a parallelism - though here admittedly low - with Chapter 11 which deals with the stated issues for the Kugu-Nganycha

It is also hoped that the weighting of this present chapter towards the questions of marriage and moiety organization will limit the need for their detailed treatment when we discuss the Kugu-Nganychara.

A. Marriage

In this discussion I confine myself to the ethnographic sources, though there already exist extensive commentaries (already referred to in Chapter 1). The primary sources themselves are highly confused.

1. The Regulation of Marriage:

Apart from the exogamous character of the clan (and, consequently, the local group) there are few points where McConnel and Thomson arrive at any agreement.

The first reference to the regulation of marriage among the Wik-Mungkana occurs in Radcliffe-Brown (1930: 245). He writes, on the basis of access to McConnel's field notes (see Thomson 1972: 18):

> The Wik-Munkan tribe has a kinship system which is a special variant from the Kariera type. The mother's sisters are distinguished according as they are older or younger than the mother, and a man is permitted to marry the daughter of his mother's younger brother, but not the daughter of his mother's older brother.

McConnel takes her lead closely from Radcliffe-Brown. She writes (1934: 310-11) that the Wik-Mungkana practise "cross-cousin marriage (with modification)". The modification relates to the terminological distinction between MB+ (muka) and MB- (kala), and "between their offspring" (MB+C - moiya, MB-C - kutth).[1]

These features, coupled with institutionalized junior sororate and levirate (which she sees as consistent with terminological

1. I have retained McConnel's orthography.

practices) lead McConnel (p. 311) to talk of *"the junior marriage"* (McConnel's italics). Later her analysis will be complicated by such notions as "age lines", "a downward age spiral" (1940: 435), the "cousin-mother" (p. 444), and "inter-generation exchange" (1950: 109). I do not propose attempting to explicate these notions here. The important points are, firstly, that McConnel saw the marriage system as unilateral in character, prohibiting marriage with the patrilateral cross-cousin, but enjoining marriage with the matrilateral cross-cousin (1939: 72); and, secondly, that marriage was possible with actual as well as classificatory MB-D (see, for example, 1934: 331, where McConnel argues that 'The customary or most orthodox marriage is that which takes place between the children of "blood" brother and sister. A man marries his mother's full brother's daughter - he marries back into his mother's clan, into which his father married before him'; also 1940: 439, where Bambegan, her informant, specifies that one may not marry the daughter of one's muka, i.e., MB+).

By contrast, Thomson fails to insist on the unilateral character of the system anywhere in his writings (1935b, 1955, 1972: 18-19). In direct contradiction to McConnel, he argues that the father-in-law can be drawn from both the MB+ and MB- categories (and mother-in-law from the FZ category) (1972: 18, also p. 19). Furthermore, he is careful to specify that the latter may not be "ego's own or actual FZ or MB" (p. 18). He continues, in an important passage:

> ... a clear distinction is made in Wik Moŋkan between actual or own MB and FZ and more distant relatives who are designated by the same terms. Own MB is referred to as *kal kampan* or *muk kampan*. *Kampan* means friend, relative or clansman, and is applied especially to own or near kin. One informant remarked that an actual or own *kala* is a "friend-uncle, not

> for marrying", as distinct from other men, called *kala* who are potentially *kal amp,* fathers-in-law (p. 18).

I shall return to the notion of kampan in Chapter 11.

One other point should be made before proceeding. While McConnel sees the marriage system reflected in the kin terminology, and vice versa, Thomson provides a more genealogically- (and politically-) oriented specification of the marriage rule:

> It is a second-cousin system, the woman whom a man may marry being determined by people in the second ascending (grandparents') generation, who select one or more of the 'sisters' of his father's mother (*ngatjawaiyo*) to be his *ngatjawaiyo mallan* or "outside" FM. The daughters of this women thenceforth become potential mothers-in-law to ego... (1955: 40; see also 1972: 18-19)

He indicates (1972: 18) that an actual FMZ may be selected (and, in the case of a female ego, an actual MMZ). Terminologically, the second-cousins are not distinguished from first-cousins; thus, "on first examination", i.e., by looking at terminology above, the marriage rule would appear to be "a simple first cross-cousin system" (1955: 40).

2. Sister Exchange:

Both McConnel (1940: 451,153) and Thomson (1972: 19) refer to sister exchange. McConnel indicates that such exchanges, contracted between "distantly-related clans" (p. 451) may create a "company" (p. 453).

3. "Wife-stealing" and "sweetheart" relationships:

McConnel (1940: 454-5) refers to "wife-stealing" between Wik-Mungkana, "and neighbouring northern tribes". The Wik-Mungkana involved are drawn from clan II ("Bonefish") on the lower Archer River; the "neighbouring northern tribes" are situated on the coast

between present-day Aurukun and Weipa. She indicates that the marriages were finally regularized, and led, at least in one case, to a marriage promise. McConnel's data (see, especially, 1934: 362-67, Diagrams 1-6) are sufficiently extensive to indicate that so-called "inter-tribal" marriages were far from infrequent. Confining my analysis only to marriages in which at least one of the partners is of the Wik-Mungkana "tribe", the following figures emerge: 15 "tribally" (i.e., linguistically) endogamous marriages; 4 marriages between Wik-Mungkana (Archer River) people and Kendall River people; 2 Wik-Mungkana (Archer River) with Wik-Natera (Wik-Ngathara) partners; one Wik-Mungkana with a Wik-Patya (Wik-Paacha) partner; and one with a Wik-Ompom partner. There are also 4 Wik-Mungkana marriages with partners whose language (and totem) is unspecified. Three of these cases involve Wik-Mungkana who almost certainly do not belong to the Archer River region.

An interesting case is the Wik-Mungkana - Wik-Ompom marriage. McConnel, in fact, lists the Wik-Ompom partner as Wik-Mungkana (see Diagram 3, 1934: 364), although the clan (clan I) is clearly Wik-Ompom (see clan I in Appendix B). Yet, McConnel specifies, on the bottom of her diagram, that the two clans involved in the marriage (clans I and II) 'form a "company"'(1934: 364). McConnel (1934: 334) expands on this notion in another passage:

> Two locally adjacent clans which continuously intermarry form together a "company", and are as it were one ground with interchangeable hunting rights. That is, a man has a right to hunt on his wife's ground, and offers in return the hospitality and privileges of his own to his wife's people. The senior man in a "company" has charge of the "company" grounds.

It might be thought on this evidence that residential propinquity (or propinquity of owned territories) may be just as important in the formation of a "company" relationship as intermarriage, or

indeed, that marriages are a product rather than the cause of the relationship. In this connexion, it should be noted that McConnel continues: 'A company may be formed between any two intermarrying clans, and one clan may form more than one "company" with other clans.' (I shall return to the concept of "company" in Chapter 9.) The important point is that language affiliation is no guide to marriages (nor, clearly, to tribal affiliations). Moreover, there seem to be no strong grounds for distinguishing between what McConnel describes as "wife-stealing" which she sees as an "inter-tribal" activity (see, for example, 1934: 319, where she talks of "a fine looking woman who had run off before marriage with a man of another tribe...") and "sweethearts" or "runaway matches". She writes of the latter: "... When all else fails, there is the *maritji*, or runaway match. The *maritji* marriage is orthodox if carried out by a man and a woman of the formally right relationship." She continues, "... if single men and women thus settle their problem, it is considered a good thing to have happened." (p. 339). However, "If a man and woman of the formally wrong relationship ... runaway, the affair is a tribal concern and a case for interference on the part of those relatives responsible for the actions of the runaway pair." (p. 339). The offenders might be speared, apparently in the leg (1934: 339,356). In the case of adultery, McConnel (1934: 339) indicates that 'the dispute will be settled between the husband and "sweetheart" in a duel with whatever support they can raise from their relatives.'

While McConnel claims (1934: 356) that "irregular unions" were discountenanced, they were apparently a regular feature of social life, even being represented, in a comical fashion, in a dance (p. 339).

4. Marriage Arrangements:

McConnel argues that "runaway" marriages only occur when all else fails (see above). This appears to be an extravagant claim, given the degree to which they are culturally acknowledged, if not favoured. In normal circumstances, according to her view, marriages are subject to arrangement:

> The diplomatic arranging of marriage is one of the most interesting and important factors of social life in an aboriginal community. The balance must be kept between the various families concerned. Parents have obligations from the past to meet, as well as future advantages to consider. Marriages are not only arranged for the unborn child, but agreed upon by parents whilst their children are quite young. A system of "promise" has already mortgaged the future. (1934: 336).

Elsewhere she stresses that the agreement is "between two families" (1940: 449); and talks, in the event of the lack of a son in a particular family, of a device which represents "the renewing or forging of an agreement between two families, so that, conditions being favourable, these two families will intermarry" (1940: 451). On the surface it would seem clear that the arrangement is indeed between families, for the prospective son-in-law enters into "taboo" relations with a number of kin of his wife to be: WB, WF, WM, WMB, WFF, WMM, WMMB, and WMMF (see McConnel 1940: 452, Diagram 4). The only close cognates of the wife who are excluded are, for example, WMF (and his sister, WFFW/WMFZ), and WMFF (and WMFFZ), because they are, according to McConnel, members of "Ego's clan". (None of Ego's close cognates - F, M, MB+, FF, FM, etc. - are subject to restrictions.) According to the diagram, MB- is also WF, and thus subject to a "taboo". He is, of course, genealogically closer to Ego's wife than to Ego himself. MB+ is unrestricted, but is genealogically equidistant from both Ego and his wife (to whom he stands as FB+).

In an interesting passage McConnel (1934: 331) compares the

"tendency on the part of families to unite in the male line for purposes of a common interest in a locality which supports them", with "a tendency to establish a system of marriage settlements with other family groups of a similar nature". Elsewhere in her writings these "tendencies" are in fact regulatory in character. Clan members do (and must) live in their own clan territory; clan members do (and must) marry into other clans.

In terms of marriage, however, it seems illegitimate to reduce what are in fact inter-familial arrangements to inter-clan activities. I suggest, then, that a more fruitful line of enquiry would be to examine the cognatic-based (i.e., familial) structures involved; and, only as a later and a subsidiary task, to examine their relationships with clan (or descent-based) constructs (see Chapters 9 and 11).

B. Moieties

McConnel first refers to moieties in connexion with personal naming. She writes (1930: 185):

> Names may be passed from one clan to another as long as the clans belong to the same moiety. This is sometimes done for example when members of one clan are dying out and there is no one left to take the name of a certain totem.

She fails to specify how moiety affiliation is determined or transmitted. Moreover, she does not indicate whether the moieties are named or unnamed, or whether they are referred to by circumlocutions (e.g., "people of my side", "people of the other side"; "people of the sun"; "people of the shade").

Writing in the same year Radcliffe-Brown (1930: 245-6) refers explicitly to patrilineal moieties on the east coast of the Peninsula, in "the Yao tribe ... named Koyana and Karpeya." No doubt he derived this information from Thomson's unpublished field-notes. However, although he also had access to McConnel's field-notes, he does not refer to moieties among the Wik-Mungkana, or, indeed, among any of the Wik "tribes".

McConnel (1934: 354) makes the first detailed reference to moieties in the following passage:

> The Wik-munkan recognize ... two exogamous patri-lineal divisions and call them KUYAN and KATPI. They explain that the people called KATPI are of one "blood" (or line of descent) and those of KUYAN are of another.
>
> If a man is KUYAN, his child is KUYAN, members of his own clan are KUYAN, and also all clans addressed by the same terms as his own clan are KUYAN - whilst his mother, wife and sister's husband are KATPI, as are members of their clans and all other clans similarly addressed. If a man is KATPI, the position is reversed. I was not able to entirely classify the various totemic clans under the two patrilineal moieties, KUYAN or KATPI. In many cases clans are almost extinct, and the only marriages on record between them may be irregular ones. Irregular marriages take place more frequently nowadays, owing to the disintegrated state of the tribes in this area, particularly in the vicinity of mission and cattle stations. Although the idea did not seem to be very definitely developed, I was informed that all clans were either KUYAN or KATPI - as a matter of course. (See also McConnel 1934: 310)

Despite her reporting of the names, the account is still very uncertain. McConnel sees the moieties arising out of marriage, over a long period of time, between two families. As "senior" and "junior" branches of lineages split they form "brother" clans, which maintain, as we might express it, a knowledge of themselves in the form of moieties. This logic is a little hard to sustain, for, whatever moment McConnel takes as her starting point, the situation will be complex. It can never be, as she wishes to describe the

situation, simply two intermarrying families. This begs the question of moieties entirely, for there might equally be three, four or more families, with each family at the centre of its own universe. It is difficult to see moiety organization arising organically though it may well reflect, in the case of patrilineal moieties, an ideology which places strong emphasis on tracing descent through the father, and sees mothers and wives as radically "other" in some way. In situations where ties of consanguinity and affinity cannot be demonstrated, the principles used to classify people enjoying close familial ties may well be brought to bear. However, the process implies consciousness and an initiator or set of initiators. Once initiated it requires families to gear themselves, at least in part, according to the dual division, so that the process does not have to be recreated at each moment of social action. Of course, marriages, if they did not follow the dictates of the dual division, would soon disrupt it. Equally, it is only as long as marriages do follow its dictates that the illusion can be maintained that moieties determine marriage and terminological usages.

In the event, McConnel can find no certain evidence that marriages follow the rules of moiety exogamy. Lacking this evidence, she unconvincingly argues that marriages are more irregular with the coming of the mission and the cattle stations without at all specifying the nature of their impact on marriage practices. She states that she has been unable "to entirely classify the various totemic clans under the two patrilineal moieties." Unfortunately, she does not report the data which in fact she was able to obtain; and if irregularity of marriages was a factor it would have been better had she checked the marriages known to her to see which were regular or not, and the precise circumstances which surrounded irregular marriages. It seems incautious of her to state that

irregular marriages "take place more frequently nowadays" without giving any concrete data. How did she reach this conclusion? Perhaps on the basis of informants' statements. If so, it is well to be warned that the superiority of the past over the present is a pervasive theme in Aboriginal societies. The past is a "Golden Age" in which the land gave abundantly of its resources, ceremonies were attended by hundreds of men, who were taller and better-looking than those now living, everyone was a mighty hunter, and irregular marriages simply never occurred.

It should also be noted that McConnel does not appear to have obtained the moiety names herself. Rather she acknowledges assistance from Mr. F. Monaghan, the manager of Rokeby Station, (1934: 354; note that Rokeby is located some 150 km. inland, on the boundaries of Kaanychu country (see Chapter 2).

Given the inconclusive nature of her initial discussion of moieties, it is surprising that McConnel wishes to introduce them, for example, into her discussions of people's attitudes to totems belonging to clans other than their own. She notes that to members of their own plan the pulwaiya are "protectors"; and "to those of brother clans they are more distantly friendly." However, she notes, "...to members of distant clans related by marriage they engender fear and awe - since they are believed to be ready to protect the interests of their own clans." She concludes: "Totems thus fall into two groups, according to the clans they represent, and in this way they may serve as a means of placing members of society in their relationship to others, and accordingly subsumed under one or other moiety". (McConnel 1934: 354-55). If McConnel is correct, two consequences at least would appear to follow: firstly,

that the totems of even distant brother clans would seem to be more protective to an individual than those of his or her mother's (or spouse's) clan; and secondly that totems might attach themselves to moieties (as expressed, for example, in the classic eaglehawk - crow dichotomy). In some part of Australia the dual organization applies to the physical environment as well as to people. McConnel does not indicate whether this occurs among the Archer River people. Nor does she indicate whether the moieties as such are associated with particular totems (as indeed they are among the Kuuku-Ya'o and Umpila of the east coast of the Peninsula). Rather, she gives the impression that it is simply the totems of each clan which are associated in a cumulative, but loose and diffuse way, with each moiety; but it is by no means clear that informants if asked could assign a particular totem to a particular moiety. The answer if given might take the form: Item x belongs to moiety A because it belongs to individual I...n (from Clan i....n) and he belongs to moiety A.

Returning to the first consequence, it seems curious - unless it reflects a crucial element of their world view - that distant (and no doubt often fictive) agnatic ties between distant clans should take precedence over close uterine (or perhaps affinal) ties among the Wik-Mungkana. Do the Archer River people really view the pulwaiya of distant agnates as more protective than those of their mother? It is hard to envisage this situation, especially when McConnel herself notes that with distant agnates the degree of protection offered becomes weaker. Unfortunately, McConnel does not specify attitudes towards one's mother's (or one's spouse's) pulwaiya. Moreover, she does not specify one's responsibilities towards the latter, or even to those of fellow agnates. Given that

the notion of moiety affiliation is sufficiently powerfully developed that the accumulated clan totems of a particular moiety are conceived as providing protection to all moiety members, it seems odd that McConnel's account is so imprecise. If mother and mother's brother are regarded as protective figures, it seems inconsistent that their totems are not seen in a similar way. It would seem safer, at this stage, to withhold acceptance of McConnel's formulation that the role of the pulwaiya as protectors is directly linked with considerations of moieties. A more cautious conclusion would be that certain clans are seen as brother clans, and their totems can offer protection to members of each brother clan. However, this should not rule out the possibility that pulwaiya might serve as protectors of members of clans which stand in different types of relationships. The first would appear to suggest a concept of agnatic solidarity. However, it does not rule out the possibility of other principles of solidarity.

Outside the question of moieties and their relation to pulwaiya in their role as protectors, McConnel makes a number of other points:

1. Moiety names are used "to differentiate people" in situations other than intimate situations (in which "clan names" are used) (1934: 355). McConnel does not specify the nature of these situations.

2. She writes (1934: 355):

> Moiety dissociation is seen in embryo in the use of different terms by a mother and father for their own children, in the obligations and taboos between a man and his mother-in-law and in the use of a different language by a man in addressing his brothers-in-law.

It is difficult to tell precisely what McConnel means here. The use of different terms by the father and the mother for their children need imply nothing with respect to moiety organization, simply that

descent is traced both through the father and the mother. Furthermore, where there are patrilineal clans a man and his mother-in-law will belong to the same moiety. His spouse will belong to her father's moiety. It does not seem useful, any more than in the case of "protective" pulwaiya, to see one's own moiety as secure and free from restriction (for this is palpably not the case with respect to a man and his mother-in-law), and the opposite moiety as comprising all which is harmful, and subject to "restrictions and obligations". Yet it is in this sense that McConnel seems to employ the concept.

3. On special occasions, such as marriages and mortuary ceremonies, "it is usual for the relatives to range themselves in two groups according to their dual relationship, and identify themselves with one or another moiety by sharing the burden of the social responsibilities of some of its members." This statement simply does not coincide with the ethnographic facts reported earlier (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of mortuary practices; and the discussion of marriage earlier in this present chapter). In the case of marriage, members of both moieties will be ranged alongside the husband (namely his parents - including, no doubt, his mother -, and brothers). It may be that members of the same moiety as the principals will be ranged alongside them when overriding consideration such as close uterine ties do not intervene. In other words, each principal (in the case of marriage, the husband and the wife respectively; and, in the case of mortuary ritual, the deceased and his or her widow respectively) will be surrounded by his or her immediate family, with the addition of agnates who are not consanguines. In other words, no single-factor definition, such as provided by moieties, will account for the composition of the peoples ranged on either side of the camp.

4. McConnel (1934: 355-56) also writes:

> It is no doubt convenient to have names which denote this consciousness of a common social link binding one group of relations to each other and distinguishing them from each other ... at times of the year when exchange marriages based upon wider relationships are contracted, to have this ready means of placing men and women under the correct category. It is noticeable nowadays, when numbers are depleted and marriages less easily arranged, that these exogamous moieties are used as a guide almost more than are the special kinship terms, so that whereas exogamy is still rigidly observed, differences in generation are sometimes ignored. In the case of irregular marriages, the nearest links are observed and the more distant ones disregarded.

It is a pity that McConnel does not in fact pursue this issue in detail. Are there preferences involved in the categories of women marriageable under irregular circumstances? For example, the categories of women available from the opposite moiety will include FM, M, MZ, MBD, FZD, ZD and ♂DD. The useful point that McConnel makes is that "the nearest links are observed and the more distant ones disregarded." The factor - closeness (presumably, genealogical or territorial in character) - does not concern moiety affiliations in the least. The latter constitute a separate factor. It can only be concluded that marriages, although irregular, should obey a number of criteria; and that, on the basis of McConnel's information, marriages should not be contracted distantly (either territorially or genealogically) and are not permitted, in the case of a male Ego, with female agnates (either real or classificatory): i.e., MM, FZ, Z, D, BD, or SD.

It is inexplicable, given the important function which McConnel attributes to moieties, that they do not emerge more clearly from her discussion. She herself senses this for she feels obliged to add a footnote, contrasting the vague attribution of moiety membership among the Wik-Mungkana against the situation among "the Koko-yalunya tribe on the Bloomfield River." There "the clans are

definitely classified as either Dabu or Wallar, i.e. as belonging to one or other of the tribal moieties (McConnel 1934: 354)."[1]

Thomson (1935b: 463-4) notes that exogamous moieties occur among "most of the tribes of Cape York Peninsula". More particularly, he notes: "In the Koko Ya'o and Ompela the moieties are called Koiyaṇ and Karpéya; in the Kanjo and Koko Ai'ebadu tribes the word is slightly altered and becomes Koiya and Karpi." These terms are obviously close cognates of the terms given by McConnel for the Wik-Mungkana. However, Thomson adds: "In the Wik Monkan tribe ... there are no moieties, although they appear again in the tribes immediately to the south, and thence occur right down to the Mitchell River" (See also Thomson 1936: 374).

McConnel (1937: 351,355-6), while ignoring Thomson's comments, continues to refer to moieties among the Wik-Mungkana. She introduces them into her discussion of mortuary practices without preamble. In the first reference (1937: 351) she refers to "women of the wife's moiety" when, in fact, it seems she means "women of the deceased's moiety". Other references in the same article to moieties shed little real light on mortuary practices; and she may have been better served by talking of "brother clans", and the rôle of male and female agnates, as well as of close uterine kin.

Sharp (1939) is the next contributor to the issue. Later commentators (notably Needham 1962b; McKnight 1971; and Scheffler, in Thomson 1972) fail to report his contribution to the issue and ignore McConnel's clear indication (1939: 64) that he visited Aurukun and spent an unspecified but apparently short period of time with

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1. In another article (1931: 9) McConnel records that Dabu is "a scrub bee" and Wallar is "a forest bee."

Wik-Mungkana (and other) informants. He links the Wik-Mungkana with a number of other "tribes" which are characterized by "named patrilineal moieties" (1939: 268). In an important but confusing footnote (269, n.20), he repeats Thomson's claim (1935b: 464) that the Wik-Mungkana lack moieties. He continues:

> McConnel, 1934, p. 310, p. 354, reports the same moieties for the entire tribe that were given to me by informants from the western Wik Munkan territories, both north and south. Informants furthermore reported moieties with the same names for the Kok Iala, inland north of the Archer River, and a Kok Mbewam informant whose homeland was as far north as Merluna at the head of the Watson River stated that the same moieties were present among his people who did not use the Koiya and Karpi terms of the neighbouring Kandju. On the other hand, the Wik Alkina ..., between the Archer and the coast to the north-west of the Wik-Munkan, like the tribes directly north of them, lack these moieties (Sharp 1939: 269, n.20).

Sharp reports the following moiety terms for the following "tribes": kuyan and katpi, for Mbiywom (his Kok Mbewam), Kok Iala (retaining Sharp's orthography), Wik-Mungkana and Wik-Iiyanha (his Wik Ianyi); koiya and karpi for Ay.path (Aiabado); koyen and karpen for a "tribe" Sharp calls Aiakampana[1]; and kuyen(u) and katpen(u) for Pakanh (his Aiabakan), Kugu-Nganychara (Wik Ngantjera) and a "tribe" Sharp refers to as the Ngantja.[2] He lists nothing for Wik-Me'anha

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1. Sharp locates this "tribe" on his map (p.256) to the south east of the Thaayorre, and outside the Wik region as I have defined it. I have never been able to elicit this term from Kugu-Nganychara informants who should be close neighbours of this tribe. They suggest that it must be equivalent to the WM. expression, wika kampana, which might be glossed as "family speech" or "language used by (my) close relations" (kampana - "family", close cognates).

2. Sharp locates this "tribe" north-east of the Thaayorre. The term is clearly nganycha, meaning "we" (1 nom. pl. excl.). Regardless of whether, in fact, there is a group (of some composition) which identified itself to Sharp in this manner (indeed, any group, of any composition, would identify itself precisely in this way in certain contexts), the group is located firmly in what I refer to as the Kugu-Nganychara region.

(Wik Me'ana) and Wik-Ngathana (Wik Natanya).

Before proceeding it is important to establish what Sharp means by "informants from the western Wik Munkan territories" (see the long passage cited above). Apart from his collapsing Wik-Iiyanh and Wik-Mungkana under a separate heading ("Wik Munkan and Wik Ianyi") (p. 268) in the text and locating only Wik-Mungkana on his map (p. 256) (but see my discussion under Wik-Mungkana and Wik-Iiyanh in Appendix A), the reference to western Wik-Mungkana is confusing unless it refers to local groups located on the eastern margin of the coastal plain (or, on the western margin of the "bloodwood country"). This means, of course, that Sharp, like Thomson and McConnel ignores Wik-Mungkana groups living on the coast.

McConnel (1939: 63-64) replies:

> The *Wikmunkan* of the lower Archer have little or no use for named patrilineal moieties (*kuyan* and *kätpi*), though they know of them. But the up-river *Wik munkan*, in common with the *Wikampama*, use them in contact with the *kandyu*, whose *koiya* and *karpai* are interchangeable moiety names. The *Wikianyi* also use these names *kuyan* and *kätpi*, in contact with their southern neighbours, which are interchangeable with the *Bakano* moieties *kuyab* (sic) and *kätpin*, and the *Aiyaboto* moieties, *kuya* and *karpai*. Patrilineal named moieties do not exist to my knowledge in any of the coastal tribes north of the Edward River.

In the latter connexion she notes that Sharp gives moiety names for the Wiknantyara (Sharp's Wik Ngantjera; my Kugu-Nganychara) which "correspond with the Bakanu named moieties." (McConnel 1939: 64, footnote 20). McConnel's Bakanu corresponds to Sharp's Aiabakan and my (Ay)-Pakanh.

She further takes Sharp to task for attributing moieties

to groups north of the Watson River where they are, purportedly, "inconsistent with the social organization" (1939: 64). She refers notably to the *(M)beiwum* on the Watson River (Sharp's Kok Mbewam; my Mbiywom). She states (1939: 64, n.21) that "... it is probable that these names are borrowed from their Wikampama neighbours."

Sharp does not refer to Wikampama (my Wik-Ompom). While there is a possibility that McConnel confuses her Wikampama with Sharp's Aiakampana, the term she gives is probably equivalent (in some sense) with his Kok Iala.[1] At this point the issues become very confused. We have been informed by McConnel that the Wik-Mungkana clans on the lower Archer River have "little or no use for ... moieties," but in a context where she notes that moieties are likely to be invoked in dealings between "tribes" (e.g., Wik-Mungkana of the upper Archer River with Kaanychu; and, as we have just noted, Mbiywom with Wik-Ompom), but where the coastal "tribes" have no moieties. My own research indicates that Aurukun itself falls within an estate, the members of which in fact speak Wik-Ompom. Consequently, Sharp's insistence on the presence of named moieties among "western Wik Monkan territories" would seem to be confirmed, if only on the basis of the principle presented by McConnel. However, the issue is by no means closed:

(1) Sharp locates the Kok Iala "inland north of the Archer River." If my argument is correct, and Kok Iala is indeed equivalent to Wik-Ompom,

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1. Sharp appears to be under the impression that there are Kok languages in this region, just as there are Kuuku or Kugu languages elsewhere in the Peninsula. He refers not only to Kok Iala but also to Kok Mbewan (sic) (1939: 256) and Kok Mbewam (1939: 268). The term Kuuku is not used in connexion with any language in this area at Aurukun. It may be that Sharp obtained these terms from the eastern coast of the Peninsula (e.g., from speakers of Umpila or Kuuku-Ya'o). The issue certainly requires clarification.

the "tribal" territory would have to be extended westward towards the coast to include Aurukun (on the Archer-Watson estuary, and virtually within sight of the sea).

(2) However, McConnel (1939: 64) reports that "... Sharp questioned at one time the existence of named moieties... in the vicinity of Aurukun Mission." Unless McConnel is referring to a source other than the paper (Sharp 1939) specifically referred to in her article it seems either that she is mistaken, or her reading of the passage cited earlier is radically different from anything which seems possible taking Sharp's comments at face value. Indeed, he apparently confirms her view of things, as against Thomson. If she refers to a source which I have been unable to trace, or is in fact alluding to a private communication, then Sharp may be guilty of a contradiction.

At least one solution seems possible. In referring to Kok Iala, which, as far as I am aware, is the name of a locality, kókyala (and is the name now given in English to a creek running off eastwards from the lower Watson River), rather than a language or a dialect, Sharp may be referring, in fact, to a local group which speaks Wik-Ompom, and, in the east, is bounded by Kaanychu-speakers who, all writers concur, have named moieties. Following McConnel's principle, this local group would be called on to employ moiety terms in its dealings with its Kaanychu neighbours.

Another divergence between Sharp, Thomson and McConnel concerns the presence or absence of moieties among the coastal "tribes". Sharp notes that they occur among the coastal tribes (his Ngantja and Wik Ngantjera) though he does not in fact specify moieties for Wik-Me'anha (his Wik Me'ana) or for Wik-Ngathana (his Wik Natanya) which border the south-western Wik-Mungkana (which he claims have moieties) and he lists nothing for the Wik Alkina or Wik Natera

(my Wik-Ngathara), and the Wik Tinda, though they constitute the western neighbours of the north-western Wik-Mungkana. McConnel flatly denies the presence of moieties anywhere (on the coast) "north of the Edward River." Thomson, as we have already noted, reports moieties for all Wik tribes south of the Wik-Mungkana.

Furthermore, in Kinship and Behaviour, published in 1972 but reported as being in manuscript form as early as 1935 (see Thomson 1946: 158, note 2) Thomson re-states that moieties do not occur among the Wik-Mungkana (1,15) although they "occur among the Wik Alkan and Wik Ŋatara. The Wik Alkan call them Tiwum and Wemi" (1972: 15).

In Names and naming in the Wik Mongkan tribe, his report is the same, noting that there are "no named moieties" among the Wik-Mungkana, but that they are found among the "Wik Alkan and other immediate neighbours of the Wik Moŋkan" (1946: 158). Despite these clear comments he then proceeds, rather unhelpfully, to introduce moieties into his discussion of naming practices (1946: 160). (For a similar comment see Scheffler in Thomson 1972: 15).

McConnel makes one or two passing remarks (1940: 435; 1950: 108); however, they shed no new light on the issue. In a later publication (1957: 91) she makes what appears to be a fairly gratuitous comment, to the effect that emu and native companion (brolga) belong to different moieties, as do the "grounds" or territories in which their respective auwa are found. No more here than elsewhere does McConnel systematically relate "grounds" or territories to moiety organization; nor does she go beyond this stray comment in linking natural species (in the form of auwa,

or protagonists in a story) to moieties. The comment must be accepted as being suggestive and worthy of further enquiry, nothing more. As the birds are seen to be in conflict McConnel finds it useful to refer to moieties, though already I have suggested that to view moieties as being in deep-seated opposition to each other oversimplifies the relationship. Moreover, closer examination of the story shows that the story involves two couples and their children. In each case the families are bird specific, i.e., there is a family comprised entirely of emus, and a family composed entirely of brolgas. Further, at the beginning of the story the brolga mother entrusts her children to the care of the emu mother. These issues raise problems for McConnel's interpretation (and, indeed, if she is correct, the nature of moieties in general); however, she does not consider them.

There have been two commentaries on moiety organization among the Wik-Mungkana, one by Needham (1962b: 223-64), the other by Scheffler (Thomson 1972: 15-16).

Needham's survey of the literature begins with the statement that "The characteristic feature of Cape York Peninsula tribes is exogamous moieties..." (1962: 226). His authority would appear to be Thomson whose claim, in fact, is somewhat less ambitious. He notes (1972: 1) simply that "Most of the tribes of the Cape York Peninsula are divided into exogamous patrilineal moieties..." He specifies that the area covered by his survey "lies north of a line running west from the Endeavour River at Cooktown to the Mitchell River on the Gulf of Carpentaria." However, even for this region,

Sharp lists 54 "tribes" of which only 32 (including the Wik-Mungkana which Thomson rejects) are specified as having patrilineal moieties. Moreover, in 13 of these cases, including all the Wik "tribes" where moiety terms do apply, the terms are close cognates, covering a range of minor variations: koiya, koiyan, kuyen, kuyan, koyen(u), on the one hand, and karpi, karpeya, karpen, katpi, katpen(u), on the other. The suggestion must be that the moieties involve inter-tribal as well as intra-tribal activities. Hence it is probably illegitimate for Needham to consider them characteristic of tribes as such.

Needham (1962b: 226-8) sets out to survey all McConnel's and Thomson's reports, although, in fact, he fails to consult one of McConnel's papers (1937b). His survey proves inconclusive. However, he returns to the issue later in the same paper, noting the possibility that "the Wikmunkan might... distinguish moieties only peripherally, where they are in contact with tribes (such as the Kandyu) which certainly have named exogamous moieties." (Needham 1962b: 249). However, he rejects this suggestion, by checking out all marriages and determining that the "scheme of alliances" thereby generated (See pp. 344-5) are "consistent with the presence of exogamous moieties." (1962b: 249; see also Needham 1963: 143-4, for a fuller treatment of the pattern of alliances). He adds:

> We may not conclude that there certainly are such moieties, for it is possible (though highly unlikely) that random evidence from a two-section system without the absolute alliance status entailed by moieties might yield the same result. Nor may we infer that such moieties are named, for the Wikmunkan might well distinguish exogamous moieties not by proper names but by general designations or descriptive circum-locutions. Nevertheless, we do have empirical reason to think that there are exogamous moieties, whether they are everywhere named or not, and in the light of the ethnography we may infer that they are distinguished by the Wikmunkan themselves (Needham 1962: 249-50).

Needham's analysis is limited by the fact that he only plotted marriages involving Wik-Mungkana clans. Moreover, McConnel's clear statement, reported earlier, that the Wik-Mungkana were hesitant to assign moiety labels unambiguously to particular clans sounds a note of caution.

Between Needham's and Scheffler's commentaries, McKnight (1971: 160-1) was able to pursue the issue in the field:

> From my inquiries it seems that the terms *kuyan* and *katpi*, are inland (upriver) terms, possbly (sic) *kandyu*. They are certainly not Wik-mungkan terms. I never heard them used in marriage discussions and indeed it took a while for my informants to understand what I was talking about (but that may have been the result of my pronunciation). However, it is possible that they have unnamed patrilineal moieties. If so, I do not know how the clans are grouped. The only information that I have to offer... is the fact that a number of the patricians (sic) are regarded as being patrilineally related. Whether this is extended to the formation of partilineal (sic) moieties I do not know.

In short, McKnight comes down on the side of Thomson, although he allows the possibility of unnamed moieties, raised by Needham, to remain. The notion of patrilineally-related classes is reminiscent of McConnel's comments about "brother clans." This phenomenon is also found among the Kugu-Nganychara (see the discussion under ngalamp in Chapter 10).

Scheffler (in Thomson 1972: 15,18), like Needham, fails to exhaust all the sources, although he has access to and refers to Needham's survey. He concludes as follows:

> Surely, if moieties were a significant feature of Wik Monkan society no competent anthropologist who worked as long in the area as McConnel and Thomson both did could have missed them. The disagreement had to be over which groups of Wik Moŋkan make use of the concept and in what social contexts, not over whether or not all Wik Moŋkan do so!

The latest pronouncement on the issue comes from Alpher (1976: 84) who writes about the discrepancy in McConnel's and Thomson's data (again ignoring Sharp): "This particular point is laid to rest by Scheffler in his commentary appended to Thomson (1972: 15): the Wik-Mungnh knew about their neighbours' moieties but did not practise the ceremonialism, therefore they had no moieties."

This may well have been the intention of Scheffler's remarks (and Alpher's statement is in line with sentiments that I have expressed privately on the issue to Scheffler and to others). However, although Scheffler does specifically recall Thomson's comments about interaction between WM-speakers and Kaanychu-speakers on the Archer River, there is no reference anywhere in what he writes to "ceremonialism", as Alpher implies. The issue of moieties is clearly not "laid to rest."

Part II : THE KUGU-NGANYCHARA

Chapter 7 : Introduction : The Kugu-Nganychara

I have already emphasised the fact that, although McConnel and Thomson both talk freely of the Wik tribes, or of the Wik-Mungkana and allied tribes, they in fact concentrate heavily - indeed, almost exclusively - on the Archer River region. If this practice is to continue to have currency in future anthropological writings, it is necessary to establish whether their generalisations hold true for the Wik area as a whole, or apply (within the limits we have established in earlier chapters) only to the Archer River region.

At this stage we can state positively that, although both principal researchers focused on the Archer River, they also had access to informants from other regions. As we have already noted, McConnel in particular travelled extensively south of the Archer, riding on horseback down the Kendall and Holroyd Rivers, and along the coast. Thomson is known to have spent time at Cape Keerweer, and also possibly on the Kendall River. Moreover, both researchers make passing references to other Wik groups throughout their writings. McConnel especially notes those variations in social organization which she had observed or about which she had been informed. Nevertheless she did not feel compelled to revise her view that between the Edward River in the south and the Archer River in the north she was dealing with a single type of social and totemic organization. (See, for example, McConnel 1930: 181,188). Moreover, Thomson, though he challenged her on other matters, never challenged her on these points.

On objective grounds, however, their joint position does not seem altogether secure. Neither writer produced much hard data

on the other Wik groups, and the information presented is mostly unsystematic and anecdotal in character. At the very least, their statements require verification.

For this reason, I now turn my attention to a detailed discussion of the Wik- (or Kugu-) Nganychara, located in the extreme south of the Wik area. Basically I propose to follow the framework already used in reviewing the literature on the Wik-Mungkana of the Archer River.

My tasks are as follows:

(1) To present detailed data on another Wik "tribe".

(2) To compare the Wik-Nganychara with the Wik-Mungkana (Archer River) to determine similarities and differences.

(3) To attempt to establish whether apparent gaps in Thomson's and McConnel's accounts of the latter were due to faulty or inadequate reporting, or whether in fact they signal major structural differences between the two populations.

The first task will be completed in the current section (Part II). Tasks 2 and 3 will be held over to Part III.

The area of study is roughly bounded by the Kendall River in the north, and, in the south, by Moonkan Creek which flows into the sea, just north of Edward River Aboriginal Community. I refer to the people affiliated with this area as the Kugu-Nganychara. This term has multiple frames of reference, and is far from satisfactory as a general cover term. It is doubtful that any person either from within or outside the area would use the label to refer to the resident population of the area as a whole.[1] I wish to make it

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1. For example, informants from the Cape Keerweer - munpun area told Peter Sutton (July, 1977 at watha-nhiina) that the Wik-Ngenycharra

clear that I use the label only as a convenient shorthand. Its precise character will be discussed below.

Determining the area of study has posed immense difficulties. Apart from relatively marked boundaries along the coast near the Kendall River and at Moonkan Creek, it is difficult to delimit the area on interactional grounds. Geographically there are no conspicuous physiographic features such as mountain ranges to serve as natural boundaries. I have had to rely on countless remarks and fragments of data which suggest that people within the area interacted at a fairly high rate with each other. Later I shall argue that it may be useful to see the Kendall-"Holroyd" riverine system as constituting a geographic and social whole. However, this argument is the result of many years of contact with the general Wik region, and intensive analysis of data. It was not possible, initially, to isolate an 'area of study' as such beyond a very vague formulation and a set of decisions, taken by me and by certain people who became regular informants. The latter came from each of the rivers within what I here call the Kugu-Nganychara region. They see themselves as linked, and as different from various sets of identifiable "outsiders". No doubt it would be possible, given a form of network analysis, to

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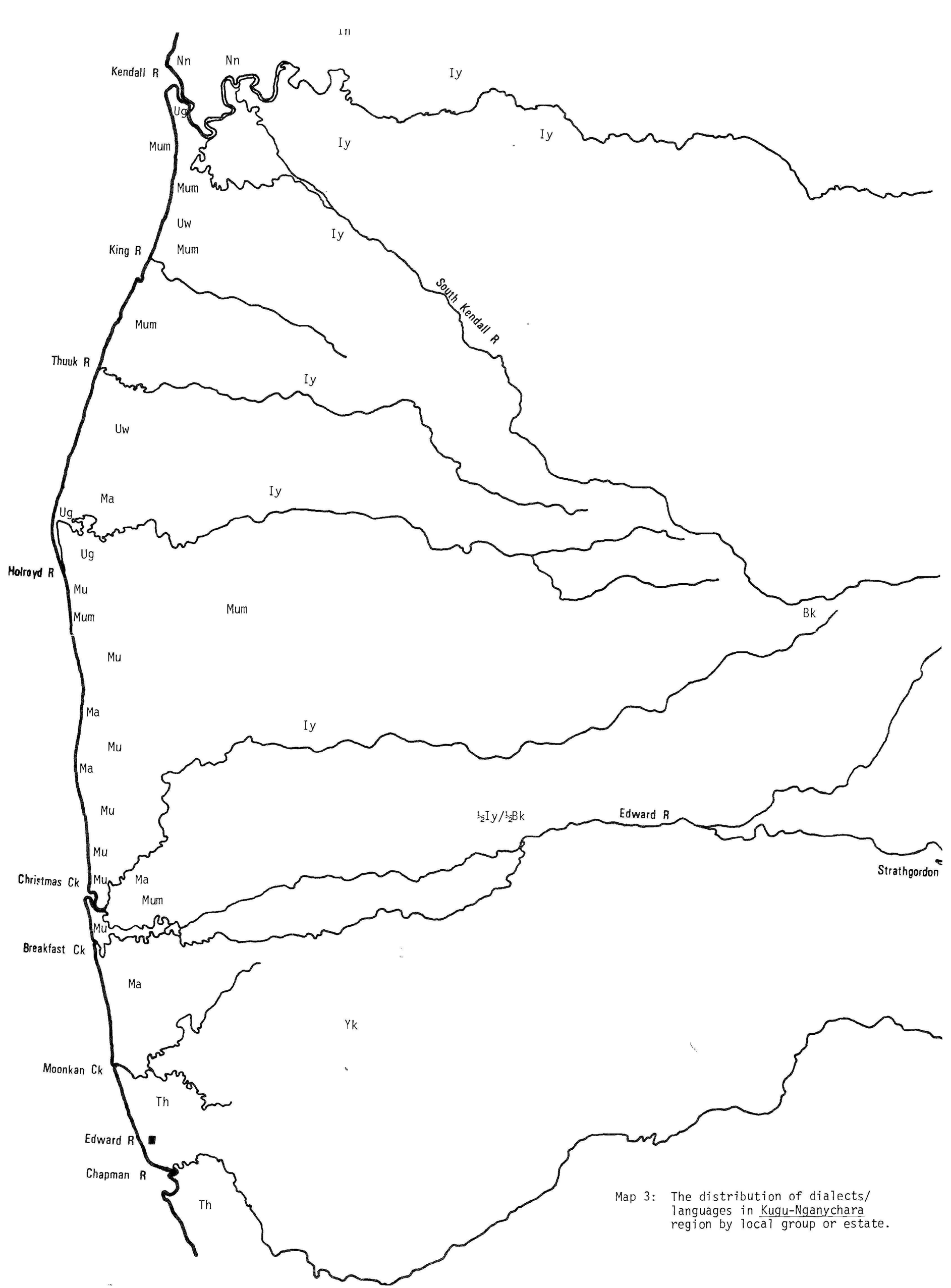
1. (Cont) (their term for Kugu-Nganychara) consisted of people drawn exclusively from the Kendall River (south bank; coastal). However, the term could not properly be applied to people from further south. A woman from the "Thuuk River" (and speaker of Kugu-Uwanh) was described as speaking "Mumənh-than-than (half-half)"; and she was not to be considered as Wik-Ngenycharra. A man from "Christmas Creek", and a speaker of Kugu-Mu'inh, was described as Wik-Mangk. From other evidence given it seems clear that these same informants saw Muminh, Mu'inh and Uwanh as Wik-Ngenycharra dialects. In short, attribution of linguistic labels at this distance (35-60 km.) is vague and confused.

In this connexion it should be added that the "Christmas Creek" man referred to by these informants has repeatedly, in discussions with me, stressed the centrality of his language, Kugu-Mu'inh, to Kugu-Nganychara, and, at the same time, vigorously excluded Kugu-Mangk.



Map 3: The distribution of dialects/ languages in Kugu-Nganychara region by local group or estate.

establish the reality of what I call the Kugu-Nganychara as a relative distinct population. The content of the networks could be very comple However, I am bound to the view that, regardless of the precise content chosen for analysis, the network would show a close mesh in the area I have chosen for study.

It has been a common practice to choose language as a marker of distinctive social groups. As indicated earlier, this procedure is extremely dangerous. However, it might be noted that in this particular case, none of the languages or dialects spoken inside the region is distributed outside the region, i.e., the Kugu-Nganychara region exhausts the range of a number of dialects/languages.

One of the recurrent themes in the discussion which will follow is the division between coast and inland. Along the coast the following languages or dialects are (or were) spoken: Kugu-Muminh (Mum), Kugu-Uwanh (Uw), Kugu-Ugbanh (Ug), Kugu-Mu'inh (Mu), Kugu-Yi'anh (Yi) and Kugu-Mangk (Ma). Inland the linguistic picture is much simpler. Wik-Iiyanh predominates; other inland people are described as "half-Iiyanh, half-Pakanh." Except for the final case (i.e., "half-Iiyanh, half-Pakanh"), all these labels may be obtained by getting people to identify their own language or dialect (i.e., by self-identification). External identification (i.e., getting informant to identify the dialect or language spoken by other people) will often produce a different, and frequently a more simplified, picture. Finer distinctions may be obliterated. For example, speakers of the other coastal dialects are apt to treat Kugu-Yi'anh and Kugu-Mangk as alternative labels for the one and the same dialect. However, some speakers of these dialects rigorously distinguish between the two.

At the level of self-identification discussed here the labels - with one exception - differ systematically from each other. That is, the labels rely on a single differentiating lexical item, viz., the verb meaning "to go, be in motion". In Kugu-Mu'inh, this verb is mu'inh; in Kugu-Uwanh, it is uwanh; and so on. To give an example: pala mumi, pala ugba, pala uwa, pala mu'i and pala iiya (from Kugu-Muminh, Kugu-Ugbanh, Kugu-Uwanh, Kugu-Mu'inh and Wik-Iiyanh respectively) are all imperative constructions, meaning "Come here". The one exception is Kugu-Mangk, the meaning of which remains obscure. The prefix kugu is a general term meaning "Speech, talk". It is equivalent to wik(a) which serves as a prefix in the labels Wik-Mungkana and Wik-Iiyanh. It is notable that south of the Kendall River this prefix is retained only for what I refer to as the inland division (viz., Wik-Iiyanh). On the coast kugu is the standard prefix

It is important to note that even at the level of self-identification the labels used are not always sufficiently distinctive For example, although a speaker may identify his language as Kugu-Ugbanh he may wish to distinguish his particular form of Kugu-Ugbanh from other forms, saying "Mine is a bit different from that other Ugbanh". On other occasions, he may wish to identify with other Ugbanh-speakers. To use another example, speakers of Mu'inh may state that they speak "one language" - Kugu thaha thonon (thaha - mouth, speech, thono - one, same). (Finer and alternative labels will be discussed in Chapter 10 under Totemic organization).

Terms other than those used for self-identification tend to be employed by people who lie outside the normal circle of interaction. For example, Wik-Ngathana speakers located north of the Kendall River use the term Wik-Ngenycharra for people south of the Kendall River. The label relates essentially to what I shall refer

to as the coastal division; as used by speakers of Wik-Ngathana the label probably generally does not apply much south of the "Thuuk River". That is, it embraces (but does not exhaust) the range of three dialects: Kugu-Muminh, Kugu-Ugbanh and Kugu-Uwanh. The people identified by this term consider that it has pejorative overtones. However, perhaps only in recent years, it has been taken over in the local form - Kugu-Nganychara - by speakers of all the coastal dialects with the exception of Kugu-Mangk and/or Kugu-Yi'anh. I do not have firm evidence to confirm whether speakers of the latter dialect(s) align themselves with this usage. However, a number of speakers of the other coastal dialects, i.e., Kugu-Muminh, Kugu-Uwanh, Kugu-Mu'inh and Kugu-Ugbanh, exclude them. The grounds for the exclusion are unclear. Speakers of the other dialects/languages indicate that Kugu Mangk (and/or Kugu Yi'anh) is "very hard". Moreover, speakers affiliated with the dialect(s) are treated as marginal within the broad context of social and political life within the region. I shall return to this issue in Chapter 11.

The term nganychara is the first person plural (exclusive) possessive pronoun. The pronominal nganycha (first person plural (exclusive) nominative pronoun) is characteristic of these coastal languages (cf. nganhthana in Wik-Ngathana; WM. ngana; Th. nganych.n). It is commonly used in speeches which stress the character of "one-ness" of the people affiliated with these coastal dialects: nganycha thonong; thana wiya ("We one; they different"). If the label Kugu-Nganychara has been taken on by these coastal people, there can be little doubt that it is because it marks their distinctiveness and symbolises their consciously-assumed and oft-asserted political isolationism.

It should be noted that I have included speakers of Wik-Iiyanh under the general rubric of Kugu-Nganychara, following the occasional practice of the coastal people. However, the coastal people will normally exclude them on technical linguistic grounds (see below); moreover, the inland people continually assert their differences from the coastal people, despite the fact that the two populations, separable on the basis of a coast-inland division, interact at a high level.

In Wik-Iiyanh the first person plural (exclusive) nominative pronoun is ngana (cf. Wik-Mungkana). On this basis Wik-Iiyanh is referred to as Kugu-Ngana to distinguish it from the coastal dialects.

While I am using a linguistic label to refer to the people living in the region, it should now be clear that its use here is not meant to evoke any such notion as "one tribe, one language". In daily life the linguistic status of the label Kugu-Nganychara has no fixed character, and I would ask that its linguistic connotation be henceforth ignored. The same would apply if I referred to people living in the region as the Mungkanu people (using the label employed by people living to the south of the region to refer to all (or many) people living in the region). This label has little or no linguistic value. If I have employed the label Kugu-Nganychara instead it is because, firstly, it is more useful than Mungkanu which could legitimately be applied to the majority of people living in the Wik region, and because, secondly, it is a label used exclusively within the Wik region.

While denying the use of language as the primary criterion in isolating this area of study (i.e., the Kugu-Nganychara region),

I wish to make several remarks about the linguistic picture. The distribution of languages and dialects within the region is shown on Map 3. The unit for assigning linguistic affiliation is the estate (See Chapter 9). Wherever possible, assignations are based on self-identifications. It will be noted that although there is high linguistic diversity on the coast, some broad patterns may be determined. Kugu-Mu'inh is confined entirely to the south of the "Holroyd River". Kugu-Uwanh is confined entirely to north of this river. The same applies, by and large, to Kugu-Ugbanh. The language most widely distributed is Kugu-Muminh. Only three estates are affiliated with Kugu-Mangk and/or Kugu-Yi'anh. One of these (north of the "Holroyd River") is extinct; another is located in the extreme south-western corner, and its members are sometimes described as speaking Kugu toho-toh, not Kugu-Mangk. My decision to include this estate within the Kugu-Nganychara region was made after some hesitation. My researches indicate that formerly all people within the region could probably speak or "hear" (understand) the five major dialects or languages (Iy, Mum, Uw, Ug, Mu) spoken within the region. However, the same would not apply for languages spoken outside the region, e.g., Wik-Ngathana in the north, and Thaayorre in the south.

Some alternative ways of isolating the population for study were considered. The most promising was ceremonial affiliation. On this basis the area could be neatly divided between wanam (a ceremony focused on the "Holroyd River") and pucha (a ceremony focused on the Kendall River). There is a formal division in mythology which separates the two ceremonies in the region of the "Thuuk River". Moreover, men will habitually assign themselves to the "wanam mob" or to the "pucha mob". (Elsewhere in the Wik region men will assign

themselves to the "winychinam mob" or to the "apalacha mob". With respect to the latter, men from the Love River area refer to themselves as "Love River apalacha" to distinguish themselves from Kirke River or "Knock River" apalacha. Taken together these ceremonial groupings exhaust the Wik region). However, the classification contains problems. Firstly, although the distinction works fairly well along the coast, the situation inland is less clear. Although inlanders participate in these two coastal ceremonies, they do not see themselves linked with them in any binding sense. Secondly, to accept the distinction would have meant separating the Kendall River from the "Holroyd River" (and "Christmas Creek"). Later I shall argue that these two rivers do in fact represent somewhat isolable social universes, at least in their lower reaches. However, to discuss them separately in the chapters which follow would have constituted a needless complication. The fact is that social interaction was not confined to one or other river system. Indeed, informants from "Christmas Creek" will stress their links with people on the Kendall River, and vice versa. Moreover, in terms of the issues I propose to examine there is not sufficient diversity between the two sets of riverine peoples to justify their treatment independently of each other.

Before proceeding it is worth pointing out that these ceremonial groupings cut across linguistic affiliations. Members of the pucha mob speak the following languages or dialects: Wik-Ngathana, Wik-Me'anha, Wik-Iiyanh, Kugu-Ugbanh, Kugu-Muminh and Kugu-Uwanh. Members of the wanam mob speak the following languages or dialects: Kugu-Uwanh, Kugu-Ugbanh, Kugu-Muminh, Kugu-Mangk, Kugu-Mu'inh and Wik-Iiyanh.

Another strategy would have been to group people on the basis

of riverine affiliations. As we shall observe in a later chapter it is legitimate to talk of the "Kendall River mob", the "Holroyd River mob", and the "Christmas Creek mob". These terms are all in common usage. However, the problems raised by following this approach are similar to those raised by using ceremonial groupings. I shall argue that these riverine groupings are real units of social interaction. However, there is also a high level of interaction between the "mobs". Moreover, there are no major differences in social organization between any of the riverine groupings. If the groupings differ in certain cultural respects (which, in any case, I can signal are very slight), it seems preferable not to divorce them from the context of the social interactions in which they are invoked and made manifest. The area chosen for study represents what I consider to be this context.

The Kugu-Nganychara now live principally at Edward River and Aurukun, though there is a smaller group resident at Coen. In general (and apart from the more inland areas) the Kugu-Nganychara did not move out of the bush systematically until the late 1950s, though mission contact had been established with the area in 1928 and some children were taken into the dormitories at Aurukun after this date. However, even today, most people in their mid-20s or older were born in the bush; and, apart from the wet season, at least parts of the region have been subject to constant occupation. Outstations are now established on the Kendall River, on the "Holroyd" River and at the mouth of "Christmas Creek", at waalang. The Kendall River outstation is said to have 70-80 residents. The total population drawn from the region probably numbers 240-50. Apart from certain sections of the Kendall River, there is nothing to suggest that there has been massive depopulation since first contact. Informants

claim that there are many fewer "big men" these days. However, this should not be interpreted as anything more than a glorification of a "Golden Past".

The Kugu-Nganychara have virtually been ignored by researchers They have not been subject to any long-term or intensive research. Apart from McConnel, Thomson and Sharp, the reader is referred to the following published accounts which touch on the area: Hale (1976b Moyle (1966, 1968-69), Simons et al (1956), Oates and Oates (1970) and Scheffler (in Thomson 1972). Other unpublished workers include McCarthy, West, Taylor, Hall, Johnson and Martin. My own involvement with the Kugu-Nganychara has been discussed in Chapter 1 (See, also, von Sturmer 1971, 1973).

Throughout Part II any language item listed is in Kugu-Mu'inh unless otherwise specified. Also, terms in double inverted commas are Kugu-Nganychara English glosses, unless the context makes it clear that I am quoting from sources. References to estates follow the system used in Appendix C.

Chapter 8 :

Environment and economic life : The Kugu-Nganychara

This chapter divides into two broad sections. The first section is devoted to the environment in which the Kugu-Nganychara live and deals briefly with the following topics: physiography; plant communities; ecozones and the resource base; climate; and seasonality. In the second section I discuss Kugu-Nganychara economic life, paying special attention to the exploitation of fish resources. In the first section I draw attention to the extreme poverty of biological research in the Kendall-Holroyd area, and attempt to draw out some of the major environmental and climatic constraints imposed on a resident population of hunters and gatherers. In the second section, a major aim of the discussion is to highlight the distinctiveness of the coastal as opposed to the inland economy.

A. Environment

Many aspects of the environment are covered, in a broad fashion, in Galloway, Gunn and Story's Lands of the Mitchell-Normanby Area, Queensland (1970). This report treats "the lower two-thirds of the Cape York Peninsula" (p. 17); and it includes sections on climate, geology and relief, soils, vegetation, and land systems. It serves as a useful general introduction to the Kugu-Nganychara region which, located in the north-west corner, constitutes just under 10 per cent of the area surveyed. The section devoted to land systems is particularly valuable. However, in terms of the present study, the report suffers from two deficiencies. Firstly, none of the 220 localities at which ground observations were made are within the Kugu-Nganychara region. Secondly, the survey was geared towards assessing land use potential (e.g., for grazing, forestry,

and cultivation). It does not concern itself with pre-contact or current Aboriginal land use. Such issues as Aboriginal modification of the environment through firing or selective culling are therefore ignored.

In general terms the same deficiencies characterize the other (very few) scientific studies which relate to the region. Pedley and Isbell (1971) present a gross classification of the major plant communities found on Cape York Peninsula north of 16°S latitude. However, their actual field investigations barely touched on the Kendall-Holroyd region. Stanton (1976: 43-6), although he worked within the region, focusing on an area roughly triangular in shape, having the coastline between "Christmas Creek" (Balurga Creek) and the "Holroyd River" (Christmas Creek) as its base, was, no more than Pedley and Isbell, concerned with the question of Aboriginal occupation or resource use. While the only botanical studies of the region are the two just mentioned (neither of which represents more than a preliminary statement), zoological studies are entirely lacking. As for climatological data, there are no recording stations within the region. Thus it is difficult to provide more than a rough sketch of the environment.

(1) Physiography:

As already noted, the Kugu-Nganychara region is bounded in the north by the Kendall River and in the south by Moonkan Creek. The Kendall River is the largest river between the Archer River which flows into the Gulf about 100 km. to the north, and the Mitchell River-Coleman River complex (about 100 km. to the south). The Kendall River is 2 km. wide at the mouth and, thus, constitutes an impediment to north-south travel. Bark canoes are used to negotiate the river

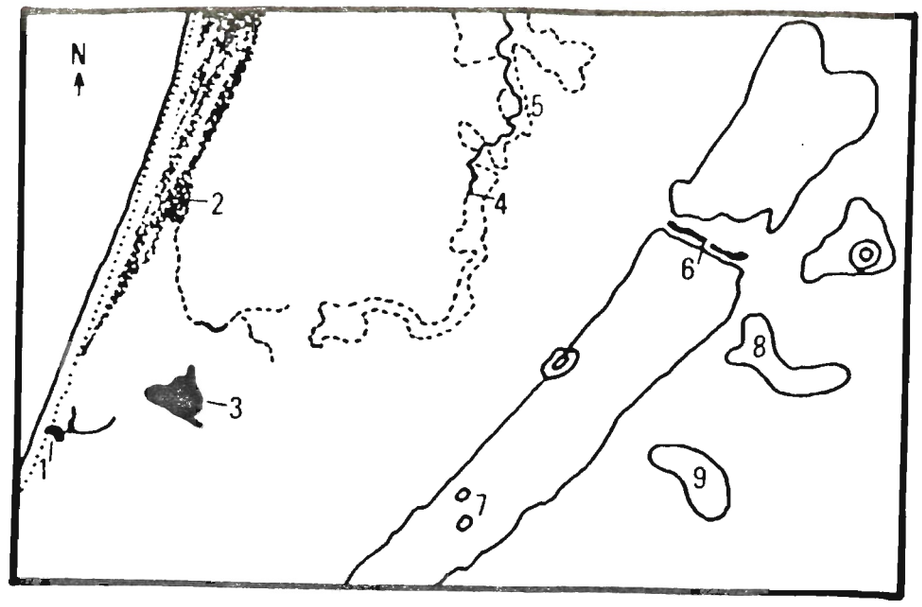
on the lower reaches, and there are important crossings at pi'a mangk.m and thaha-pul.n, 15-20 km. inland.

The coast stretches 77 km. between Moonkan Creek and the Kendall River. There are no major headlands or indentations along the coast. It forms a gentle curve, bulging somewhat at its mid-point. The coast is broken by a number of minor streams, all of which were negotiated by wading at low tide, or swimming, mostly with the aid of a floating-log. These minor streams are: "King River", Hersey Creek known locally as "Thuuk River" (WM. thuuka equivalent to thugu - snake, a named camping place near its mouth); Christmas Creek, known locally as the "Holroyd" or "Holroyd River"; and Balaurgah Creek (or Balurga Creek), known locally as "Christmas Creek". All these streams cease flowing by late June or early July, and, in the lower reaches, they consist only of a short tidal water-course, reaching no more than 6 km. from the coast and ending in a maze of winding, mangrove-lined channels which taper out onto dry saltpans.

From south of Moonkan Creek and extending some 12 km. north of the mouth of the "Holroyd", the coast is fringed by a band of low parallel ridges composed mainly of shell grit and sand. This band attains its maximum width of 5 km. at a point roughly midway between "Christmas Creek" and the "Holroyd". North of the "Holroyd" it disappears, but reappears 15 km. later and continues up to the Kendall River and beyond.

Behind the band of low ridges lies a broad, almost treeless plain (about 6 km. wide) consisting of saltpans and grasslands. It is barely elevated above high tide level. Indeed, parts of it

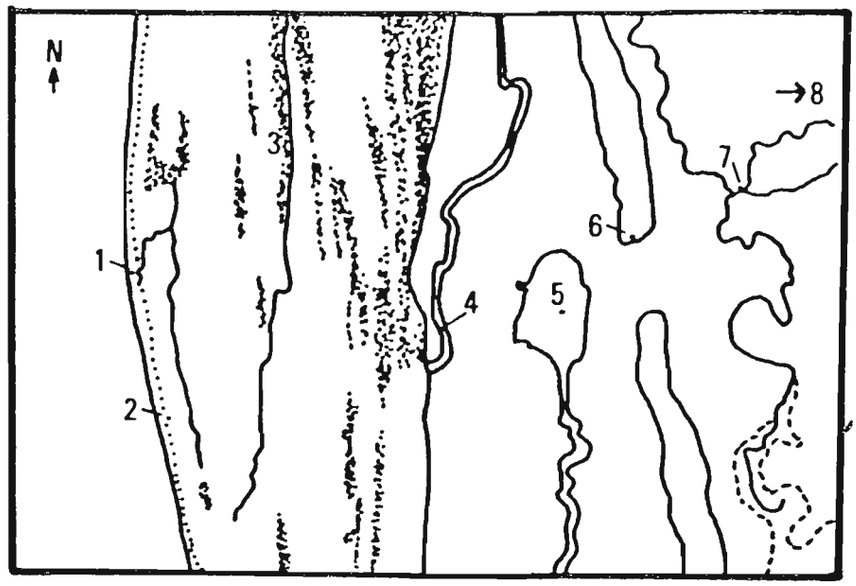
Figure 1. Environmental divisions within the South Kendall zone.



Length of transect: 10 km.

1. mangaynyi - permanent lagoon; large stands of Hibiscus tileaceus on western side; 2. nga'adha - thick scrub on the eastern margin of the coastal dune system (stippling indicates patches of vine-scrub); 3. peme - a large semi-permanent swamp in the centre of the tree-less plain with minyerin, a similar swamp indicated just to the north of it; 4. mangka pomponi - marks the point where the mangroves cut out on the small creek running through iiy (5) from a branch of the Kendall River. The plain extending between iiy and nga'adha is subject to annual burning in association with wallaby drives. 6. pi'am - long permanent lagoons, located in a gap in the ridge marking the eastern limit of the coastal plain. 7. milbe - permanent waterholes perched in the sandy ridge. The large lagoon situated on the eastern edge north of milbe is umu pimpanga (umu - round lagoon, pimpa - bullrushes). The areas marked 8 and 9 are ridges covered with open forest. They mark the beginning of the inland division.

Figure 2. Environmental divisions within the lower "Christmas Creek" zone.



Length of transect: 10 km.

1. yangku - a major coastal camp-site situated on one of the interlocking channels which link the swales of the complex coastal dune system. The stippled areas represent vine-scrub, which occurs in denser and almost continuous patches at the eastern margin of the coastal dunes. 2. kunam-nga. 3. kigajen (kiga - coastal ridge): camp-site on high ridge overlooking a long continuous channel which extends north to the "Holroyd River". 4. kaha-pepen (kaha - face, pepen - see 8 below) - long impermanent swamp situated on the coastal plain. 5. impa - large impermanent swamp noted as a geese breeding-ground. 6. kurka pelen (kurka - special term applied to this type of ridge) - a camp-site situated on the sandy ridge marking the eastern limit of the coastal plain. 7. minha ngakanga (minha - general term for animals, here meaning brolga, ngaka - water) - swampy area located just beyond the limits of salt water penetration and important brolga feeding ground. Extensive "bulgru", which brolgas continue to dig for when the swamp is dry; a major human food source before water dries up. 8. the arrow indicates the direction taken by the "road" running from yangku (and kunamnga) to pepen, a major inland lagoon situated on the main branch of the river. Downstream from minha ngakanga there is an extensive zone of sterile salt-pans criss-crossed with a maze of mangrove-lined channels (bottom right hand corner).

are subject to tidal flooding. It is bordered on its eastern margin for most of its length by a ridge, perhaps a residual beachline, pierced in places by streams running down from the interior. Except where this ridge briefly touches the coastal ridges, between "Christmas Creek" and the "Holroyd", the plain extends uninterrupted and at an almost uniform width along the length of the region. Near the "Thuuk River" mouth, where the coastal ridges disappear, the plain is separated from the sea only by a single, sparsely-vegetated ridge.

The eastern ridge marks the upper limit of saltwater penetration. Where it is pierced by watercourses there are often large freshwater marshes (as in the case of thoke, on the "Holroyd", which retains freshwater on occasions right through the dry season) or freshwater lagoons (as at pi'am, just south of the Kendall River, and at thupiji, just upstream from thoke).

To the east of the ridge there is generally a narrow band (not greater than 700 m. in width) of flat, relatively open country. It runs almost as a corridor along the length of the region. As such it serves as a major access route along a north-south axis. Between "Christmas Creek" and the "Holroyd" this corridor is bordered in turn by a vast system of low, freshwater marshlands, thickly timbered and known locally as agu kunyj.n.

Further inland the country consists of a maze of ill-defined watercourses which are dry for much of the year, and low, sandy, heavily-timbered ridges which, from the air, are characteristically dotted with round or kidney-shaped depressions. The latter are commonly undrained. Sometimes they retain freshwater throughout the year; more often, they dry up. Locally they are known as

"dry swamps" (umu thoch).[1]

In addition there are several well-defined watercourses which hold permanent water. In the north, the Kendall River (known as "Main Kendall" or wa'awa pukam (wa'awa - river, pukam - big)) flows throughout the year and in its lower reaches is linked to a number of large lagoons (notable examples are ngaka thongk.n and koka). Running into its tidal reaches from the south-east are multiple branches of the Holroyd River (known locally as the "Small Kendall"). Downstream the "Small Kendall" runs through very dry country and offers few permanent waterholes; however, upstream, it is fringed by a number of large permanent waterholes.

Further south, the "Holroyd" is the next major stream. The Kugu-Nganychara correctly conceptualise it as breaking away westward from the "Small Kendall"; and, from its point of departure from the "Kendall", it continues as a large permanent lagoon almost to the ridge which borders the coastal plain.[2] "Christmas Creek" does not exhibit the same continuous character; however, it is

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1. Stanton (1976: 45-6) divides the landscape up in a very similar way: "dune woodland"; "marine plains"; "a low ridge of medium grey sand" ("parallel to the marine plains and further from the coast"); and "Away from the coastal plain communities ... an intricate pattern of broad low ridges and depressions endlessly repeating over a vast area". He differs from my account only in omitting the 'corridor' which lies to the east of the "low ridge" marking the inland boundary of the coastal plains.

2. If I appear to stress the proper character of the "Holroyd" unduly, it is only because on the maps available for the area, notably the Royal Australian Army Survey Corps map (1:250,000 series, entitled HOLROYD SD 54-11 Edition 1 Series R 502), the "Holroyd", labelled Christmas Creek, is represented very sketchily. It appears as a set of vague, impermanent watercourses. In fact, it is a well-defined stream, and, from an Aboriginal perspective, it is perhaps the focal stream of the whole region.

well watered, as is "Breakfast Creek". The latter is crossed by a prominent rocky bar at "Nutwood" (maalun) which serves to dam up a considerable body of freshwater. Upstream there is no shortage of large lagoons, e.g., near Strathgordon Station.

The country shelves gently into the Gulf. A contour line drawn at 75 m. elevation lies about 75 km. from the coast. The rate of elevation appears fairly constant. A spot elevation taken 30 km. from the coast on Hersey Creek gives a figure of 30 m. There are no rocky outcrops, or even small hillocks. The landscape is flat, virtually without relief.

It is difficult to draw a precise eastern boundary to the region. As we shall observe later (and in line with Thomson's comments, already recorded, on the Wik-Mungkana and Kaanychu) the lines of social demarcation are much less well-defined inland than on the coast. For present purposes we need only note that, on the basis of evidence currently available, it is not too misleading to suggest that 60 or 80 km. from the coast, at a point where one might wish to draw a vague boundary, the range of environments is not significantly different from those 15 or 20 km. from the coast. At a gross level we could take the whole Kendall-Holroyd system as constituting the Kugu-Nganychara sub-region. This would mean that "Breakfast Creek" and Moonkan Creek, which form the southern boundary, would fall into another system, viz., the Edward River system. Thus, for the coastal region this gross definition works satisfactorily. Further research may vindicate it also for the interior. However, current indications are that the watershed of the Holroyd lies too far to the east to be properly included.

(2) Plant communities:

Corresponding with the shifts in landform as one moves away from the coast are highly visible and regular shifts in vegetation. Isbell and Pedley identify six major plant communities: a strandline community (equivalent to Thomson's exposed short line/dune country); 'dune woodland' (equivalent to Thomson's scrubby ridges); saltpans (see, also, Thomson); grassland (omitted from Thomson's schema); low open-woodland, with Melaleuca viridiflora and Petalostigma banksii dominant (not listed by Pedley and Isbell for the Archer River basin, and not equivalent to any category in Thomson's classification); and open-forest, with Eucalyptus tetrodonta and Eucalyptus sp. aff. polycarpa dominant (equivalent to Thomson's savannah forest). (See Chapter 2 for Thomson's classification.) The strandline community, the 'dune woodland', the saltpans and the grassland are associated with the coastal division (in terms of landform either with the coastal dunes or the coastal plains); the low open-woodland occurs at the junction between coast and inland; and the open-forest belongs exclusively to the inland division. In short, there is a much greater range of plant communities on and near the coast than inland.

The importance of this difference becomes clearer if these plant communities are seen instead as distinctive ecozones or habitats, each supporting a number of life forms, including human inhabitants. From this perspective Pedley and Isbell's classification exhibits a number of gaps and shortcomings, even at the level of flora. For example, it ignores the mangrove communities found along the lower reaches of the rivers. These communities are generally not very extensive, except on the Kendall River. However, they constitute the major habitat of a number of bird and reptile species, they often contain colonies of flying foxes, and for these, as well

as other reasons, they are important to the local economy. Moreover, Stanton (1976: 45) makes a useful addition to Pedley and Isbell's classification when he describes the plant community found on the ridge which marks the eastern margin of the coastal plain. As we shall observe in the next chapter, this ridge furnishes a number of important campsites. Thus, its distinctive characteristics and resources will often be called into play.

Of all the environments, the dune woodland offers the highest diversity (and perhaps quantity) of plant foods. It is crucial to the local economy (See the second section of this chapter). Pedley and Isbell (1971: 68) acknowledge its complexity "both in physiognomy and in floristics..." They add that "The composition of the community varies from site to site and few species have high constancy." This may account for the very different descriptions (in terms of component species) given by Pedley and Isbell, Stanton, and Thomson. Stanton provides a list of eighteen plants (fourteen at species level). It contains no more than five items (at the genus level) out of Thomson's list of thirteen plants; there is no overlap at the species level. Pedley and Isbell list fifteen plant items, of which no more than five match items in Stanton's list (again only at the genus level), and six (at either species or genus level) match items in Thomson's list. These differences may reflect the different locations sampled by each of the researchers; or they could simply reflect individual interests. None of the lists is sufficiently comprehensive to serve as an adequate description of any one location, let alone deal with the question of variability. It is unlikely that the dune woodland mosaic is entirely without patterning. It is possible to point to significant localised concentrations of particular species, e.g., the important food item, Eugenia suborbicularis, on

the coast south of the Kendall River (the'enda - kugbedha - wunyinh-awu - adham); and there may be significant differences on a north-south axis, e.g., between the Archer River and "Christmas Creek", or, at a finer level, between the Kendall River and the "Holroyd River". These are issues which require considerable fine-grained research. Here I can add simply that informants have not commented on differences (in terms of component species) in dune woodland communities within the Wik region, although they are quick to identify different types of communities which exist on the coastal dunes.

Continuing with these general issues, I can indicate that the Kugu-Nganychara are aware of differences between gallery forest communities on the Archer River and on the Kendall River, naming species which do not occur within the more southerly systems. Their presence in one area and their absence in the other is likely to mean that there are in fact species differences in the pockets of thick vine forest which occur, in multiple places and varying sizes, on the coastal dunes.

Pedley and Isbell's treatment of the coastal plains communities suffers, as does Thomson's (and Stanton's) from adopting a dry season perspective. There are no references to the leguminous plants and waterlilies supported on these plains during and immediately after the wet season, and which constitute important food items for the human inhabitants.

(3) Ecozones and the resource base:

It is clear, even on the basis of the above comments, that there are no sure base-line data for ecological studies of the region. The following tasks, among others, need to be carried out to provide

a basis for understanding and evaluating Aboriginal subsistence strategies:

1. the identification of distinctive ecozones (on taxonomic and structural grounds);
2. their distribution as quantifiable units of the total land system;
3. their component biota (from a taxonomic perspective and as quantifiable populations);
4. seasonal stress (e.g., flooding; short growing season); and
5. effects of Aboriginal modification (through firing, culling and harvesting).

These tasks require specialist skills which lie outside the expertise of this researcher. I would suggest, however, that the key environments are the dune woodlands; the marine estuarine environments; the coastal plains (as wetlands); and the freshwater lagoons/swamps (inland). These provide the major resource bases.

I have resisted reproducing long tabular lists of species based on my own rather disparate and uneven data, for this approach does not meet the requirements of an ecological perspective as just enunciated. In any case these data are available elsewhere (See von Sturmer 1978a,b; von Sturmer, J.R. and D.E. 1978; and von Sturmer and Arkwookerum 1978). Instead, the more important items (as food or as raw materials for Kugu-Nganychara technology) will be dealt with under Economy. At this point I shall confine myself to a brief discussion of introduced species.

Introduced species:

Wild pigs moved into the region probably during the 1930s. It is difficult to establish their point of provenance. Their

effect on the environment has been dramatic, destroying much of the vegetation which formerly grew on the margins and in the clay pans during their annual inundation, including "bulgru" and waterlilies. In short, much of the coastal plain is now extensively pig-rooted. They also dig for tubers on the coastal ridges, competing for many of the rootstocks with bandicoots which have virtually disappeared; and they are very active in digging brush turkey and scrub fowl nests for the eggs. They are also vigorous in their search for crocodile eggs and turtle eggs. They commonly patrol along the beaches at night.

There is also a large introduced cattle population. It is difficult to assess its impact on the environment, and on other fauna. Horses were almost unknown in the region during my period of fieldwork, but there is now a small population of both wild and domesticated horses.

Recently the cane toad (Bufo marinus) has moved into the region, northwards from Kowanyama. The toads had reached "Christmas Creek" by 1972. They are reported by my informants to have destroyed certain endemic species, notably a mangrove-dwelling goanna, probably Merten's Water Monitor (Varanus mertensi), or, possibly, the Mangrove Monitor (Varanus indicus).

Feral cats are common.

European bees now hive throughout the region.

(4) Climate:

In examining the climate of the Kugu-Nganychara region I review the following topics: rainfall; temperatures and humidity; river flow; evaporation; tides; and tropical cyclones. I summarize what I see as the major climatic constraints operating on the Kugu-

Nganychara population (including the effects of climate on the general environment). Some of these issues are taken up in a more concrete form in a discussion of the Kugu-Nganychara conceptualization of seasonality.

(a) Rainfall:

There is no recording station within the region. However, figures have been recorded for Aurukun since 1914 and for Edward River since 1952. (These stations lie at the northern and southern limits of the Wik region.)

The mean rainfall recorded at Edward River for the period 1952-1972 (incl.) is 1372 mm.; at Aurukun for the period 1914-1972 (incl.) it is 1609 mm. Rainfall declines as one moves further southwards. At Mitchell River - now Kowanyama - the mean, based on figures recorded from 1912, is 1208. Thus, it can safely be assumed that rainfall within the Kugu-Nganychara region (and generally for the whole Wik area) is as great as or greater than the rainfall at Edward River.

The driest month at Edward River is July, with a mean rainfall of 1 mm. For June, August and September it is 2 mm. At Aurukun the driest months are July and August (1 mm.), followed by September (2 mm.) and June (4 mm.). In eight years no rainfall was recorded during the months May-October (incl.).

The wettest month is January (395 mm. at Edward River; 450 mm. at Aurukun), followed by February (384 mm. at Edward River; 443 at Aurukun). Heavy falls also occur in March, and to a lesser degree in December.

The figures for the wettest and driest years at Edward River and Aurukun are presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. These figures are somewhat misleading for it would be more sensible to present the figures for each wet season separately, rather than split them on the basis of the calendar year. Adjusted in this way, the wet season for 1960-1 produced only 564 mm. of rain at Aurukun (35 mm. less than for the year 1961); at Edward River the wet season for 1965-6 produced 621 mm. of rain (32 mm. more than for the year 1966). It might be thought that wet seasons would be systematically high or low at both Aurukun and Edward River. This seems to have been the case in 1955-6, for example, when both Aurukun (2308 mm.) and Edward River (1895 mm.) had exceptionally high rainfalls. Moreover, the poorest wet season at Aurukun (1960-1; 564 mm.) coincides with the poorest wet season at Edward River (1960-1; 523 mm.). However, despite these cases, it is difficult to establish any overall pattern.

In the years during which recordings have been made at Aurukun the yearly rainfall was 2000 mm. or more in 11 years; at Edward River rainfall exceeded 1800 mm. in two years. In short, there appear to have been no prolonged droughts. At Aurukun, rainfalls were well below the mean in 1960 and 1961; and the wet seasons were poor for both 1959-60 (920 mm.) and 1960-1. However, the rainfall has only fallen below 1100 mm. in two other years (1919 and 1965). At Edward River, for the 18 years for which complete recordings are available, the rainfall has fallen below 900 mm. in only one year.

TABLE 1 : EDWARD RIVER

YEARS OF HIGHEST AND LOWEST RAINFALLS FOR PERIOD 1952-1973 (INCL.)

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
1956	941	318	299	166	45	0	0	0	1	0	47	450	2267
1966	171	289	44	1	1	0	0	0	*	4	39	30	579

* Rainfall between 0.1 and 0.4 mm.

(From figures made available by the Bureau of Meteorology, Brisbane.)

TABLE 2 : AURUKUN MISSION

YEARS OF HIGHEST AND LOWEST RAINFALLS FOR PERIOD 1914-1973 (INCL.)

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
1956	992	592	238	152	38	109	11	0	0	1	127	373	2633
1961	140	173	81	8	0	0	3	1	4	4	47	138	599

(From figures made available by the Bureau of Meteorology, Brisbane.)

The Archer River shows a similar pattern. At the Telegraph Crossing, the Archer generally ceases flowing by October or November, though it occasionally continues to flow throughout the year. Heavy flows are spread through February-March-April. The highest daily flow recorded is 313,182,000 m^3 on April 14, 1972. The total for that month was 836,600,000 m^3. The most consistently high daily flows are in March.

Figures are not available for the Kendall River.

(d) Evaporation:

Mid-month figures showing evaporation are given in the Climatic Atlas of Australia, Map Set 3. For the Aurukun region the evaporation figures for the months December-January-February are 250 mm. For coastal Aurukun the figure for the months March-April-May is 150 mm., rising to 200 mm. as one moves both southwards and inland. For the period June-July-August, the coastal figure is 200 mm. rising to 225 mm. both inland and southward; and for the period September-October-November, evaporation is highest, with a figure of 250 mm. for the coast near Aurukun and rising to 300 mm. as one moves inland or southwards.

(e) Tides:

Characteristic of the lower Gulf, the region has generally only one tide per day. From tide heights for Weipa (Evans Landing) it can be observed that tides are highest during the wet season. In 1972 the highest tide (3 m.) occurred on January 28. The tide heights fall progressively as the dry season advances, with the smallest high tides occurring in July and August (with a highest recording of 2.1m.). By October the tides have risen sufficiently

TABLE 3

WEIPA : RECORDS OF TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, RAINFALL, AND NUMBER OF RAINDAYS

(from figures made available by the Bureau of Meteorology, Brisbane, 1978)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEAR
9 am. Mean Temp(c) + Mean Relative Humidity (%)													
Dry Bulb	27.5	27.1	26.8	26.1	24.9	23.1	22.4	23.5	25.5	27.2	28.4	28.3	25.9
Wet Bulb	25.3	25.3	24.9	23.5	22.4	20.7	19.7	20.2	21.3	22.5	24.1	25.0	22.9
Dew Point	24	25	24	22	21	19	18	18	19	20	22	23	21
Humidity	83	86	85	79	79	79	77	72	67	65	68	75	76
3 pm. Mean Temp(c) + Mean Relative Humidity (%)													
Dry Bulb	29.9	29.2	29.7	30.7	30.2	29.4	29.2	30.4	31.9	33.2	33.2	31.8	30.7
Wet Bulb	26.1	26.1	25.9	24.8	23.8	22.6	21.6	22.0	22.6	23.8	25.1	25.9	24.2
Dew Point	24	25	24	22	21	19	17	17	17	19	21	23	21
Humidity	73	77	73	60	56	53	48	45	42	43	49	61	57
Daily Max Temp(c)													
Mean	31.8	31.2	31.5	31.8	31.3	30.4	30.2	31.6	33.3	34.8	34.7	33.4	32.2
86 Percentile	33.8	33.2	33.3	32.9	32.6	31.7	31.4	33.0	34.9	36.4	36.2	35.1	
14 Percentile	29.6	28.9	29.7	30.6	30.0	28.9	28.9	30.0	31.9	33.3	32.9	31.9	
Daily Min Temp(c)													
Mean	23.6	23.5	23.2	22.1	20.7	19.3	18.3	18.5	19.8	21.1	22.7	23.5	21.4
86 Percentile	24.7	24.4	24.2	23.8	22.8	21.7	21.0	20.8	22.2	23.2	24.2	24.6	
14 Percentile	22.6	22.3	22.2	20.6	18.9	16.8	15.9	16.2	17.2	18.9	21.2	22.2	
Rainfall (mm.)													
Mean	430	552	432	132	17	3	1	*	4	20	131	263	1985
Medium	393	615	393	93	8	1	1	0	1	4	136	269	2048
Raindays (No.)													
Mean	24	20	28	15	6	1	2	0	1	2	10	16	125

(From figures made available by the Bureau of Meteorology, Brisbane.)

NB. The 86 Percentile figure means that there are at least 4 days in the month on which the temperature was as high as, or higher than, the figure listed. Conversely, the 14 Percentile figure means that at least 4 days in the month were as cool as or cooler than the figure listed.

(b) Temperature and Humidity:

The nearest available recordings of temperature are from Weipa, which is north of, and slightly hotter and wetter than Aurukun. The figures (which represent averages of recordings taken over the last 15 years) are listed in Table 3: WEIPA: RECORDS OF TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, RAINFALL, AND NUMBER OF RAINDAYS. These figures are largely self-explanatory. The hottest months are undoubtedly October and November. This coincides with informants' perception of temperature.

(c) River flows:

The variability in river flows is great. Recordings have been made by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission of river flows in the Archer River at the Telegraph Crossing (on the telegraph line north of Coen), 189.9 km. from the river mouth, and at Ring Yards (82.9 km. from the mouth); and in the Holroyd River at Ebagoola (222.2 km. from the mouth) and on Strathgordon Station (91.7 km. from the mouth). The figures recorded at Strathgordon are the most relevant for the area. However, recordings have only been made since December 1972, and are not complete for any one calendar year. From the figures available, it is possible to establish that the Holroyd River (South Kendall River) ceases to flow as early as August and recommences as late as the end of December. In the year 1976-77, the river ceased to flow only for 8 days (16-23 October 1976). In two years (1973, 1976) the highest flows were recorded in February, with a high of 20,791,000 m^3/day on 19 February 1976. Flows as high as 14,000,000 m^3/day have been recorded as late as April. No September reading has exceeded 100,000 m^3/day, and the daily figure is generally much lower. At Ebagoola the river has often ceased flowing by June, or early July.

to start flooding the saltpans. The biggest range also occurs during the dry season (January 1 1972: Low tide: 0.37 m. at 0240 hrs; High tide: 2.9 m. at 1865 hrs). In 1972 the lowest tides occurred in June (-0.06 m.).

(f) Tropical cyclones:

Lourensz (1977) presents a survey of tropical cyclones for the period 1909-1975. He divides the Australian coastline into "straight-line units of 100 km. each" (p. 3). The Kugu-Nganychara region falls into units nos. 66 and 67. There are 7 cyclones known to have crossed the coast in unit no. 66; and 3 in unit no. 67. A disastrous cyclone (Cyclone Dora) destroyed the Church of England missions at Edward River and Mitchell River (now Kowanyama) in February, 1964. Winds of 161 km./hour were recorded, and the storm surge height was 2.7 - 3.4 m. above normal tide height for that time of the year. Informants tell of a fierce cyclone which they say struck the Kendall River region before living memory and killed all residents at a particular campsite. Another cyclone is said to have washed away an island which lay just off shore from me'a-awu or kuladha (just north of the "Holroyd River" mouth). Informants indicate a long submerged sandbank running off from this point as marking its former location. They claim it was inhabited, and was covered with scrub.

(g) Kugu-Nganychara conceptualization of seasonality:

In most respects the Kugu-Nganychara calendar seems to be identical to that given by Thomson for the Wik-Mungkana. Indeed, the terms are either the same or close cognates:

Thomson's orthography	Revised orthography	Kugu-Nganychara equivalents (Mu.)	"English" gloss
ontjin	onycha.na	oynych.n	"Dry-wet time"
kaiyim	kaya.mana	kay.man	"Dry time", "Hot time" or "Hot-dry time".
turrpak	thurpaka	thutpa(m)	"First storm"
karp	kaapa	kaba(m)	"North-west" or "Wet time"

The Kugu-Nganychara are quite explicit about the features which distinguish one season from another. They are seen most clearly perhaps in the English terms which the Kugu-Nganychara (and other Wik speakers) use to refer to each season (see above).

(1) "Dry-wet time" (approx. mid-April to late July) refers to the fact that the rains have ceased, yet there is plenty of surface water. The commencement of the season is signalled not only by the cessation of rain, but also by the fact that the tall stems of the grass, Heteropogon triticeus, have fallen over in response to the initial drying of the soil and to the winds which have turned round to the south-east. The stems all lie flat pointing towards the west.

(2) "Dry-wet time" is itself divided into two periods - "deep water time" (oynych.n ngaka thangku; ngaka - water, thangku - deep) and "shallow water time" (oynych.n ngaka waya; waya - bad, poor). At the beginning of "Dry-wet time" the freshwater is still deep on the coastal plain; the lagoons are full; the streams are still flowing; and the swales which lie between the coastal dunes are filled with water, perhaps waist-deep. As the season progresses the water continues to drain and to evaporate. When the water at the crossings on the coastal plains is only ankle deep, the season has entered its second phase. Mobility is now much easier, and the grass is getting ready for burning.

"Dry time", properly speaking, is approaching.

(3) "Dry time" or "Hot time" (approx. late July to early October): Its commencement is marked by the disappearance of freshwater except in the deeper lagoons. The saltpans and the rest of the coastal plains are totally dry. All streams except the Main Kendall cease to flow and are cut off from the sea by an intervening band of saltpan (or rocky bar, in the case of "Breakfast Creek"). Along the coast water has to be obtained from wells. The grass has completely withered, and temperatures are high.

(4) "First storm" (approx. early October to late December): The commencement of the season is marked by the build up of storm clouds, and the first scattered falls of rain from isolated storms.

(5) "North-west" or "Wet time" (approx. late December to mid-April): Its commencement is marked clearly by the arrival of the monsoonal front. The winds swing round to the north-west, and the sky is totally covered with cloud. The first days of the season are frequently marked by close stifling heat, low cloud and thin misty rain. The word, kaba, refers specifically to the N-W wind.

The Kugu-Nganychara recognize several sub-seasons not recorded by Thomson for the Wik-Mungkana:

(1) oynych.n wayath (sometimes called agu ngaka kaw.ra): During the wet season, towards the end of February or in early March, the wind suddenly shifts from the north-east and blows across the Peninsula from the east or south-east. The skies often clear partially or totally after weeks of no sun. These conditions may prevail for a week or 10 days. They are said

by informants to coincide with the heaviest flow of water down the rivers; and it presages the end of the Wet season and the ripening of the yams. "The yams are starting to get big now", is a common remark.

(2) agu pupi(m) (Ng); (WM. kaa'-nganycha; Nn kaa'-ngenycha): A strong, cold, sou'westerly wind that springs up from time to time during the cooler months (July-August). People are forced to seek shelter away from the exposed beach camps.

In addition, the Kugu-Nganychara recognize intermediate phases between the seasons. For example, the expression kay.man umu thutpam (umu - chest) is glossed as "coming towards rains". The expression, umu kabam, can be used to describe the approaching wet season, and so on.

To draw out the major points:

1. Rainfall is high and relatively reliable.

2. There is a pronounced division between wet and dry conditions.

3. During the wet season river flows are highly variable. Rapid flooding is undoubtedly characteristic of the interior, and may constitute an occasional hazard. Because of the myriad overflow channels in the lower reaches of the streams, the multiple river mouths, and the wide flat coastal plains where water can disperse without producing a sudden or marked rise in water height, flooding is less likely to be a major human consideration. (However, the flooding of the coastal plain does have important consequences; see Chapter 9.)

4. Rivers continue to flow after the cessation of rain, occasionally (and, in the case of the Kendall River, invariably) throughout the year. Because of large permanent waterholes or lagoons, water availability is generally not a problem along the rivers.

5. Evaporation rates are high, and generally exceed rainfall in all months except December through to, and including March. Low rainfalls combined with high evaporation rates from the end of August mean that readily-available water is likely to disappear in the coastal division where freshwater sources are generally shallow (e.g., swamps on the coastal plains; swales between the coastal dunes). The water quest is likely to be an issue at this time of the year (August-November), at least in the coastal division of the Kugu-Nganychara region.

6. On the figures available from Weipa, the number of raindays is equal to or exceeds 15 in 5 of the calendar months (December-April, inclusive). Shelter and mobility become major issues during this period.[1]

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1. I might add here that, in my experience, the Kugu-Nganychara are very loath to venture out in the rain, even when short food supplies would normally impel them to go hunting. They find rainy conditions unpleasantly cold; indeed, children will often cry when exposed to wind and rain.

   A more conspicuous deterrent from venturing out in the rain is fear of lightning. There are no accurate records of storm activity for the region; however, violent electrical storms are common in the period before the wet season breaks (i.e., especially during November and December). Nowadays, during storms, people huddle in their houses with all windows and doors firmly closed; and children are enjoined, without difficulty, to remain silent. In the early 1970s, at Aurukun, people would attach branches of the "file leaf tree" (Ficus sp.) to the walls of their houses during periods of intense storm activity to keep the lightning at bay. If a hunter is caught out in the bush during a storm he will dispose of all white or red clothing, silver belt buckles, and all silver coins, (cont.)

7. Tides affect the availability of marine resources and the movement of people across the bars at the mouths of the rivers. The exposure of mud flats at low tides allows the harvesting of shellfish; and certain species become available on incoming tides. Given the single tide per day, hunting or gathering activities which are dependent on particular tidal conditions may not always be possible during daylight hours. More broadly, daily scheduling of activities according to the tides must be an important consideration. (For nocturnal activities the phases of the moon take on an equal significance.)

8. Cyclones are not only dangerous; they may also bring about radical long-term modifications in the landscape. In the short term tidal surges may flood wells located on the coastal dunes with saltwater. In the coastal division where, as we shall

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1. (Cont) if he is carrying any. (Taking money while out hunting is supposed to bring bad luck.) Twigs of the tree just mentioned can be placed in the band of one's hat for protection.

If children are outside playing when a storm approaches they are forcibly instructed to abandon red or shining toys.

Adults frequently "cut" the track taken by lightning with an index finger, as a safety precaution. People tell me that they learnt this procedure from people "down Mitchell River way". In general, knowledge of lightning is attributed to southerners, especially people from around Normanton. The latter are said to be "boss for lightning"; and it is believed that the lightning is really sent by a sorcerer or sorcerers in pursuit of an intended victim. The Kugu-Nganychara (and other Wik people) have never, in my company, claimed to be able to control lightning although they generally operate in the belief that everything, whether it is a person or a "natural" phenomenon, is at least potentially controllable.

Lightning also figures in a major story from the Kendall River where the Moon Man, jealous of his wife's (and co-wives') infidelity with the Diver Man, "sings" the lightning, and thereby brings about his rival's death.

Some years ago lightning struck the boys' dormitory at Aurukun, killing one boy and injuring three others.

observe in the next chapter, estates or owned "countries" are small, and may contain only one or two major residential sites, cyclones may induce permanent shifts in patterns of land ownership and use. Cyclones are probably at their most intense on or very near the coast. In this connexion it should be noted that the coastal division is very unstable. River courses (in the lower reaches) and the disposition of sand banks at the river mouths are apt to change from one Wet season to the next. Cyclonic activities will serve to speed up these annual changes. Inland the environment is more stable and is, in any case, less prone to severe cyclonic activity.

In a situation of low population density, coupled with a high degree of social segmentation (See Chapters 9 and 10), the obliteration of any residential group by natural calamity will have serious demographic and social consequences. (The same will be equally true of unnatural calamities, e.g., deaths through raids or revenge parties.)

9. It can be stated, with some degree of certainty, that although the seasons may vary in length and what might be described as intensity (e.g., the Wet season in one year may be wetter than another and flooding may be more severe), they occur in a regular cycle. In other words, the sequence of seasons from year to year follows in a regular pattern; or, putting it another way, a particular season is not likely to fail to occur. Seasonality imposes, in economic life, a high degree of scheduling. Nevertheless, given the regularity of the seasonal pattern, major adjustments to the yearly schedule are not to be anticipated.

B. Kugu-Nganychara economy:

In examining the pre-contact economy of the Kugu-Nganychara, I propose to concentrate on the exploitation of fish and crustaceans. The reasons for proceeding in this manner are straightforward. Firstly, the Kugu-Nganychara probably prefer fish to any other food items. In my own experience, both in the bush and in settlements, when fish become available in any quantity they are likely to replace other foodstuffs entirely. Secondly, under the traditional regime fish probably constituted the major source of protein. Thirdly, fish are distributed differentially between the coast and inland, between freshwater and saltwater. Thus, observation of the ways in which they were (and are) exploited will provide a useful introduction to what we might call a saltwater as opposed to a freshwater economy. Finally, fish are subject to a variety of exploitative techniques, involving differences in the manpower involved, and differences in material culture. In short, the discussion of fish and crustacea should point up most of the important features of Kugu-Nganychara economic life

1. Fish.

(a) Principal species consumed:

One of the most enduring impressions of the region is the sound of small mullet teeming at the edge of the beach. These small fish are referred to locally as "johnny jumpers", and people from north of the Kugu-Nganychara refer to the latter sometimes as "johnny jumper eaters". However, as far as I am aware, the epithet is more pejorative than based on observed practice. Stingrays, sawfish up to 5 m. in length, shovel-nosed rays and small sharks are often seen swimming in the shallows and moving up with the tide. They are easily hunted and constitute major items in the

diet. Queenfish (Chorinemus lysan) and Barramundi (Lates calcarifer) are common in the estuaries. The latter may also be found in the surf moving between the estuaries just before the beginning of the wet season. Beach Salmon (Leptobrama muelleri) are common in the river mouths and along the beachfront towards the end of the wet season. A number of catfish and mullet species are available throughout the year.

During the wet season fish invade the flooded clay pans. The most important are Barramundi and small sharks (probably the Whaler shark, Carcharhinus macrurus.) The latter are said to enter the flooded coastal plain to breed. At kobe, on the "Holroyd", young sharks are trapped in a lagoon off the main river at the end of the wet season when the waters begin to retreat.

Inland, in the freshwater lagoons and rivers, large catfish (e.g., Salmon catfish, Netuma thalassina) and the Saratoga or Gulf Barramundi (Scleropages leichardti leichardti) seem to predominate among the larger species. However, "Jewfish" (Catfish, Tandanus tandanus), Barramundi, "Black Bream" (Black Grunter, Therapon sp.) and Sleepy Cod (Oxyeleotris lineolatus) are also readily obtained. There are a number of smaller species, often found in large numbers: Archer-Fish (Toxotes chatareus), Spangled Perch (Therapon unicolor), and Mouth Almighty (Glossamia aprion aprion). The Archer-fish, which swim near the banks and feed at the surface, are easily hunted, but though eaten formerly, are more usually employed nowadays as bait for line-fishing.

The large Mud crab (Scylla serrata) is a major food item. Shellfish are obtained from the extensive mud banks exposed near

the river mouths at low tide, and from among the mangroves.

Certain species tend to predominate in the diet, either because they are more readily available than others, and/or because they are preferred. Food preferences are by no means standardized. In a survey of thirty people to discover their favourite fish I obtained almost as many different responses. Some of the preferred fish are rarely encountered, and are thus not prominent food items. However, in the case of solitary hunting pursuits individual food preferences obviously play a large part in determining what is obtained. Hunting is not an entirely random or opportunistic activity. It cannot be viewed simply as seizing the chances presented by fate. In addition to food preferences, the prestige attached to certain species is an important factor.

Indeed, many acceptable (at one level) food items are often passed by. For example, hunters are mostly reluctant to spear sawfish (considered poor eating, and large specimens are liable to break the spear); and specimens of many species, e.g., stingrays, which look either too mature or in "poor condition" are mostly ignored. Some potential food items are excluded from the diet altogether in some parts of the region, while considered acceptable in other parts. For example, the sand crab (Portunus pelagicus) was not eaten, at least in the southern part of the region, though it was apparently consumed by people on the lower Kendall River. A southern man - from "Christmas Creek" - stated that the species was abundant, but not eaten: "There are plenty at Christmas Creek, everywhere. We don't eat. Some people eat - people north of the Archer River, and [Torres Strait] islanders, too. [Our] old people didn't eat, so [that's] why we don't eat. The old people eat this one (pointing

to a mud crab) so we eat this one." A Kendall River man denied this information explicitly, and claimed that he and his family did eat sand crabs.

Not only are there sub-regional differences of this kind but the exclusion of otherwise edible items - as this case also demonstrates - is not uncommon. Flathead, though known, are considered inedible, as are sole. Also, prawns, although common in the estuaries during the wet season and named (nga'a ngaynych.lang), were never eaten.

Moreover, even in the case of prized species, specimens are always examined closely for signs of disease or other abnormality. As soon as a stingray is speared an incision is made in its underbelly, often using a barb broken off from its tail, so that an inspection of its liver can be made. If the liver is light pink in colour, if it is fat and shows no sign of disease, both it and the stingray will be retained. Otherwise they will both be immediately discarded. I have observed a similar procedure for shovel-nosed rays and sawfish. I was also present when catfish caught in a freshwater lagoon (ngaka thongk.n) were discovered to have black markings on their underbelly, instead of the characteristic round yellow blotch. They were immediately rejected.[1]

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1. It is worth noting here that signs of abnormality or disease can vary from region to region within the Wik area. From the Love River extending north of the Archer River estuary, crabs whose shells are either blue or are marked with blue patches (from absorbing mud) must never be eaten for fear of contracting leprosy, or a disease with similar effects. Facial disfigurements are commonly blamed on the eating of such contaminated crabs, or on otherwise coming into contact with the mud. In the Kugu-Nganychara region, the mud is not feared and crabs with blue markings may be eaten with impunity.

(b) Hunting procedures:

Hunting procedures are highly diversified. They vary according to the species which is sought; seasonality; the type of environment; the techniques and technology employed; the manpower required; and the division of labour by sex and age. There are five basic techniques involved:

(1) Spearing: The use of spears, with or without woomeras, is the most general technique. Spears may be used independently of the type of environment in which the hunter is operating, the season, or the species of fish sought. Spears are thus almost infinitely adaptable; and, of course, their use need not be confined to fish alone. There is no spear whose use is restricted to fish, though it is true that certain types of spears are considered more effective for certain species, e.g., kek thu'a, the single barbed spear, for barramundi and diamond-scaled mullet. Also, the question of flotation is important. There is in fact a special light woomera which is guaranteed to float and is sometimes used when hunting fish. Spears need not necessarily be thrown. They are frequently used for prodding round the roots of trees on the margins of freshwater lagoons; and they are also used to prod for mud crabs at the bottom of their holes.

In this latter activity they are sometimes used by women. I have also seen women throw spears (held along the body of the shaft, not at the end as men do) for small mullet or occasionally at large fish (e.g., stingrays) if one happens to swim by when there is no man available to spear it. Otherwise the use of spears is confined to men.

A variety of hunting strategies is used. Along the beaches

men frequently conduct patrols, either at the margin or in the water some distance from the shore. The roughness and muddiness of the water makes this procedure somewhat problematical during the wet season. However, it is rare for the hunter to be unsuccessful at other times of the year. The mouths of streams are favoured locations, especially on the incoming tide.

At the end of the wet season and during the early part of oynych.n, when the streams are flowing, hunters would stand in water knee-deep near the main channels on the coastal plain waiting for sharks or other large fish to swim by. Hunters would waggle one of their legs backwards and forwards hoping to attract the attention of the fish which they would spear when they approached close enough.

Another technique was to use a long pole. One end was embedded in the bank of a stream, the other, to which was attached a loose bundle of mullet which had been smashed up, dipped in the water. The pole would then be agitated, shaking off pieces of the fish in the water to float downstream with the current. The shark would be speared as it "came in after smell".

Spear hunting is essentially a solitary activity. Less commonly it involves pairs of hunters. However, it is likely that at certain times small parties of men would have conducted drives in shallow restricted waters. During the wet season, when fishing in the open sea was rendered difficult by the rough conditions and thickly-muddied water, men would walk in a line, feeling slowly with their feet for the tail or the flat body of stingrays lying on the bottom. Disturbed rays were speared by one of the hunters as they attempted to escape. Hunters ran the risk of being gashed

by a stingray barb; such incidents are frequently recalled in anecdotes.

(2) Fishing poles: While the coastal plains were inundated, sharks and barramundi were caught using fishing poles and lines. According to one informant ("Kendall River-side") the hunter obtained a long straight stick (about 4 m. long) out of "Black mangrove" (Bruguiera rheedii) or any other strong timber and attached to it a rope made out of Beach hibiscus, Hibiscus tileaceus (Mu., Uw. yuku ok.nye) or another unidentified plant (Uw. yuku miji). A hook was attached (See Thomson 1939: 209-10 for details of one type of hook; another type consisting of a bent piece of wood (Uw. kaya chaka) was also used) and baited. Freshwater yabbies (Uw. nga'a katimba were popular for this purpose. The actual fishing technique was rather like that used in European-style trout fishing. The bait was flicked out onto the water, and rapidly withdrawn. When a shark or barramundi seized the bait it was rapidly thrown out onto the bank.

A similar technique was described for the "Holroyd River". At thongkodho, on a narrow channel which links the "Holroyd" with the "King River" during and just after the wet season, men had trees which they used on a regular yearly basis. The lines were baited but not hooked. Success depended on getting the fish aground while it still seized the bait. Hooked and baited lines were used in the freshwater lagoons inland, mostly, but not exclusively, by men (Iy. nga'a kaha-kuthu - fish-hook).

(3) Fish weirs: Fish weirs or barricades (Iy. nga'a munkpa) were constructed on the coastal plain across small creeks or channels running into the main watercourse. They were built of sticks planted perpendicularly in the mud, and were repaired annually. In oynych.n

they were used in conjunction with drives in which both men and women would wade in a line through the water, bearing large bundles of grass in their hands. When fish were caught they were simply thrown up onto the bank.

"Inside people," i.e., people whose estates lie within the inland division, deny that they ever employed fish weirs. A man from estate HU1 indicated to me that his father constructed a weir at thumb-awu, across a small creek near its junction with the main river. However, he himself stressed that it was an exceptional case.

(4) Fish traps: Fish traps were erected on the open coastline in the intertidal zone. They consisted of a semi-circle of mangrove stakes (Uw. yuku 'iiy) inserted perpendicularly in the sand at a radius of probably no more than two or three metres. Fish were trapped on the outgoing tide. The man who owned the trap would allocate fish to his assistants, dividing the wall of the trap into equal sections. The range of the traps is given as extending from Moonkan Creek to the Kendall River, although it is likely they were used both north and south of this indicated range.

(5) Netting: Large woven nets, yuku amba (Mu, Iy), were used to trap fish, sometimes, perhaps, in conjunction with fish weirs, but more often in the shallow marshes or lagoons left on the coastal plain after the bulk of the waters had retreated. Details of the technique involved have not been obtained. It required the labour of a number of individuals, some to hold the net and others to drive the fish towards it. (For an illustration of the technique, see Thomson 1972: 15). Nets were not made inland though informants

state that occasionally they were taken "inside" from the coast.

(6) Fish poisoning: A number of different plant species are used in fish poisoning. They involve somewhat differing techniques.

(a) Bloodwood" (yuku kampu, Eucalyptus polycarpa(?))

An informant described the process in the following terms:

> We use bloodwood leaves - yuk kampu kangk (kangk, leaves). Children, women - they can't be present at the poisoning. They are not allowed to go through there too soon. The poisoning takes a long time. When the leaves are used in a long lagoon it takes a long time. The leaves are cut early in the morning and left all day to dry in the sun. Then they are put in the water, late in the afternoon. Additional bunches of leaves have to be put in every day. Eventually they make the water black. Nobody can drink water from that lagoon. People have to get water from elsewhere. The same is true for all fish poisons. Young men camped a long way off (indicating a distance of 0.5 km.), making spears. The main camp is separate because nobody can camp alongside the lagoon. Everyone is camped a long way off.
>
> When morning comes (of the allotted day), all come in as arranged - men, young men, children, women. There is no "law" now because we have finished making the spears ready for the fish. The camp is moved near to the fish spearing, say to another lagoon with freshwater alongside.
>
> Large groups of people come in for the fish spearing. People from Edward River, or Mungkan Creek, or from the south side of the Holroyd, or waalang (at the mouth of "Christmas Creek") - all would go to pepn (lagoon and major camping place on "Christmas Creek", about 15 km. in a direct line from the coast).
>
> Two messengers would have been sent one way, another two messengers sent another place, and so on. People could come from any country for fish spearing.
>
> It doesn't matter if the water is deep (or not). The fish cannot remain alive. Next year (new) fish will come in with the tide. Fish go up the Kendall, then get brought down with the freshwater (during the wet season, and down the overflow channels from the Kendall.)
>
> End of the dry season, when the country is very dry and the water low people say: "The water is low. It is time to poison fish with the leaves."

Several points are worth stressing, firstly, the length of the process, secondly, the ritualistic character of the activity

(subject to "law"), thirdly, the allocation of specific tasks (the making of spears) to a particular age grade or status group (the 'young men') and fourthly, the separation of the major campsite from the economic activity. Women and children (and young men) are rigorously excluded during the actual poisoning. This confirms the ritualistic character of the event. There is a sense in which it is deemed necessary to keep the preparation of the spears to be used in the final hunt separate from the poisoning, as though the poisoning will not work if its intentional aspect becomes too apparent. At another level, there are good reasons for keeping children away from a potentially dangerous situation.

Like many ceremonial occasions, there is a "final day" when people are invited in from a wide area to participate in the spoils of the hunt. It is notable that their labour has not been required for any of the preparations.

It is also worth adding that the task requires a great deal of co-operative labour. At ma.lun (on "Breakfast Creek") informants drew my attention to the bloodwood trees which line the south bank. They were stunted and had a distinctly pruned appearance. Their foliage had been stripped for poisoning the lagoon at least 15 years earlier.

(7) Natural "poisoning": Each wet season a heavy load of mud is carried out into the Gulf. When strong sou'westerly winds (known locally as the "whistle wind") blow the mud is stirred up round the river mouths and many fish are drowned as the mud clogs their gills. Fish washed onto the shore are gathered for eating. In mid-August I have observed a number of fish collected in this manner

south of the Kendall River mouth (mostly large barramundi and salmon). They are smelt carefully to determine whether they are still fresh.

(c) Preparation and cooking:

Fish are classified as either "hard meat", nga'a thengen (Iy), or "soft meat", nga'a punha. A number of species fall into the latter category, e.g., Barramundi, "paperfish" (probably Black pomfret), nga'a poykolo (probably Blue catfish, Neoarius australis), and Beach salmon, nga'a anycha thupan. All soft-flesh fish must be cooked almost immediately lest they become rotten.

The preparation and cooking of fish is normally the responsibility of the person who caught them. However, there are no strong rules attached to these activities. For example, when a man has speared fish his wife or other members of the domestic circle may take over its preparation. When large numbers of fish have been caught, beyond the requirements of the domestic group, others may participate.

However, strong rules are attached to the methods employed in the preparation itself. For example, in cutting up freshwater fish, the fish must be divided by slicing down from the top of the dorsum, on both sides of the backbone. This is described as "law from the beginning". Similarly, throughout the region fish must not be gutted. The fish is cleaned by squeezing and by pulling the large intestine through the gills and turning it inside out.

With the stingrays, sharks and shovel-nosed rays, the liver is always removed before cooking and hung in a shrub or tree to dry in the sun. The rest of the fish is thrown onto a large fire.

After it has been turned over several times the flesh is stripped off onto a piece of bark or a bundle of grass. It is then taken to the water's edge where handfuls of the meat are soaked in the water and squeezed. It is now ready for eating. Nowadays the liver is enclosed in a layer of squeezed meat; both liver and squeezed meat are then wrapped in a piece of tea-tree bark, tied in a cylindrical package with grass or beach vine (e.g., Vigna marina), and buried in hot white ashes. This follows the more northerly practice. In the past the liver was always eaten raw.

Other fish are either cooked directly in the hot ashes of a fire, or, if caught in sufficient quantity, cooked in a pit oven. This oven and its attendant preparation area are usually located at some distance from people's normal camping places and cooking fires.

(d) Distribution and consumption:

Distribution normally occurs only after the fish have been cooked, and at least initially within the domestic group. The following account describes the distribution of fish (R.K./Kugu-Uwanh):

> Today I went from here to go fishing. I speared plenty of fish. Then I came back. I carried a heavy load of fish back to camp. Then I cooked the fish by broiling it directly in the fire. I was hungry and I ate. The fish that were left over I gave to my children and to my wife. Afterwards they gave fish to the old lady [the narrator's M] and the old man [the narrator's MB+, who was living in the same household at the time]. When they were full they hung the other fish up in a tree.

A number of kin, e.g., WF, WM, and MB-, have special claims on food taken by a man. Generally these relationships are asymmetrical such that a man is prohibited from receiving or claiming food from those kin who may receive or claim food from him (see McKnight 1975,

for a discussion of rules governing the ways in which foods are obtained and distributed. In broad terms his discussion holds for the Kugu-Nganychara.)

The eating of large specimens of certain species (minh a'e), e.g., barramundi, is confined to males of senior status (pama man(u) thayan). In one bush camp, a large barramundi taken from a shallow lagoon on the coastal plain was cooked and partly eaten by the man who speared it (a man of the highest status, pama kathawawa) only after the rest of his family had gone to sleep. Thus he was able to avoid the embarrassment of having to refuse his children, particularly his youngest son who was fond of making importunate demands.

Certain species (especially large specimens of certain species) are denied people undergoing transitional states, e.g., pregnancy, nurturing young children, major ceremonies, and bereavement (cf. the discussion of pregnancy among the Archer River people in Chapter 5).

Distribution is also affected by the location at which the fish was taken (see discussion of agu panych in Chapter 9); and by whom and how it was taken (cf. McKnight 1975).

There are no rules affecting which part of the fish must be allocated to which relatives (the same applies to all other animals); however, special delicacies, notably a part of the intestines of the barramundi, boiled in a baler shell, are consumed only by senior men.

Consumption is normally immediate though cooked fish will last overnight, wrapped in grass or bark and placed in a tree or on a fork or platform away from the dogs. Fish (and other meat foods) are often left overnight in pit ovens. Meat cooked in this latter fashion tends to last several days probably because it has been partially smoked. I have observed cases where barramundi which could not be consumed immediately were stripped of the cooked meat. This in turn was moulded into small round cakes which were dried out in the ashes of a small cooking fire and carried around for a number of days. People picked at them as they walked from place to place. The same applies to the compressed balls of stingray meat which are frequently carried.

The consumption of fish is attended by a special restriction which does not apply to other meat foods. That is, it applies selectively to nga'a and not minha. A man who eats fish must not make a spear with grease from the fish still on his hands (ma'a yonko, kaha-katha - "greasy hands, dirty mouth".) If he does not observe this restriction, the fish will be frightened away and it is said that he will be unsuccessful in hunting fish for about one year. Normally he must wait two or three days. In the case of minha he can make new spears immediately.

(e) Other uses of fish:

Certain species are useful for more than eating purposes. For example, stingray barbs are used as barbs on spears, and also for opening up corpses as part of the mummification procedure. Shark teeth are used in making a special knife used in fighting and, so some informants say, for cutting up wildfowl. The large nodules found on the backbones of the large threadfin (nga'a kuraw) are a source of white paint for ceremonial purposes. The bones are roasted

in a fire and pounded to produce a fine white powder.

(f) Risks:

There are certain dangers involved in exploiting fish resources. The hunter always runs the danger of being stung by the box jellyfish (Chironex fleckeri) which has caused the deaths of many people in Northern Australia. These include a number of fatalities at Aurukun among children, although no adult deaths have been recorded. Saltwater crocodiles present a constant menace; and the wounds inflicted by the barbs of stingrays are especially feared. They are extremely slow-healing. Sharks and sawfish can also inflict unpleasant wounds.

Informants also stress the risks of injury during fish drives from the spines of various fish, especially the catfish and the catfish eel.

Apart from saltwater crocodiles, occasionally present in the more westerly lagoons and lower reaches of the rivers, the dangers involved in exploiting the freshwater fisheries seem slight in comparison with the coastal fisheries.

2. Other food resources.

In the exploitation of other food resources the same principles are clearly at work. Men are generally more active in obtaining meat foods (classified as minha by the Kugu-Nganychara) and women are more active in obtaining plant foods (classified as mayi). However, there is considerable overlap in activities.

Hunting is often performed by hunters operating singly, or less commonly, in twos and threes. Especially during "hot time" (kay.man), large groups of men (and women) may come together to exploit certain resources in particular localities (as we have observed already in the cases of fish poisoning.)

Women's activities tend to be more social in character than those of men. Most often, the resources they exploit are close to the campsite, and involve little movement during the course of the day (though, perhaps, long periods of labour in such activities as diving for waterlily corms, or digging "bulgru"). Women tend to operate in small groups (consisting, for example, of a number of co-wives or sisters and their children). The preparation of vegetable foods can also be lengthy (e.g., the preparation of Dioscorea sativa) and social in character. However, it should be indicated that the preparation of game food, especially ducks, geese and brolgas, which are plucked, singed and gutted before cooking, often involves men (and women) in lengthy, fairly social activity.

The basic economic unit - from the point of view of both extraction and consumption - is the nuclear family. In its simplest form - a man and his wife - it can hive off easily from the major residential groupings and fend for itself, the man hunting, the woman gathering, but without any rigid adherence to the sexual division of labour. The picture is immediately complicated by the arrival of children, or when the husband takes a second or third wife. Also, close relations of either spouse are liable to attach themselves to the basic unit.

Typically, a hunting-gathering party may consist of a man,

his wife, young children, his wife's sister, and her daughters. Having arrived at the intended destination (say, a low sand ridge overlooking a saltpan - mangrove creek complex with freshwater nearby) the man will go off by himself carrying his spears (and nowadays, commonly, a shotgun) looking for birds. The women and children will go off together scouring the intertidal zone for crab holes which they will prod with short spears; some of the older girls may walk among the mangroves looking for mudshells. After an hour or two the party will assemble back on the sandridge, the women likely to arrive back before the man. They will clear away the grass from the selected camping place, making sure first that there are no wasp nests or caterpillar nests in the trees under which they wish to rest, and careful not to disturb any green ant nests. The girls will gather firewood and the crabs will be cooked directly on the flames. The mudshells may be buried in the hot ashes on the margin of the fire. When the man returns, perhaps with a couple of ibis and also some crabs, everyone will eat, each person distributing what he or she has caught, essentially within the nuclear family (subject, of course, to restrictions built into some intrafamilial relationships). After eating everyone will lie down and rest. Later the husband and wife may split off from the party for a time, ostensibly to go hunting but often for sexual purposes. The children may play about the campsite, throwing spears at targets or shoots of grass at each other, or looking for "bush fruit". One of the older girls may carry out the slow task of extracting seeds from Pandanus nuts which she will eat herself. About four o'clock, when it is cooler (but often earlier) the party will reassemble and walk back to the main camp. Young children mostly demand to be carried, frequently on their father's shoulders. The man will also carry his spears, woomera, (shotgun) and the birds he has taken. They will be cooked back at the main camp.

Before concluding this section on economic life, let us review briefly the other resources which are exploited. I shall deal firstly with the remaining food items, and then with non-food items.

Food items

A. Minha

The term, minha, is used, according to a Kugu-Mu'inh informant, "for (animals) living dry land, or birds - geese, ducks". He compares minha with nga'a, which is used "for (animals) living water". The distinction is rather untidy in Mu'inh for marine mammals are usually classified as minha, and sea-dwelling reptiles are classified either as minha (e.g., turtles) or as ngache (gen. snake). Moreover, the saltwater crocodile is normally (and preferably) classified as yuku, and the freshwater crocodile as minha. In Kugu-Muminh the distinction between minha and nga'a is neutralised. All animals are classified as minha. Consequently, there is no standard classification even within the Kugu-Nganychara region. I group the following items beneath the term minha because, in a general sense, it can serve to indicate meat foods, especially when linked with mayi (vegetable foods, but including one or two non-edible items) to indicate the whole range of foodstuffs.

(1) Land mammals: Although there are several marine mammals which occur within the region (notably dugong, dolphin and almost certainly another small cetacean called minh yewo, "whale"), only the dolphin was consistently exploited, especially, and perhaps exclusively, in the Kendall River estuary.

Of the land mammals the most important is undoubtedly the

Agile wallaby (minha pangku). It is found in all land environments and is occasionally speared on the beach. I have even seen it speared when swimming a tidal estuary. On the coastal ridges hunters often wait in ambush at particular trees where the wallabies are known to feed, e.g., mayi pii'a, a cauliform species, yuku wonhthojo (Uw), "Cottonseed tree", and the Leichhardt tree. A Kugu-Uwanh informant gave the following account:

> Old people used to make a bough shed to hide. They hit the wallabies as they came to feed. They put clay under their arms so the wallabies couldn't smell them. They made no noise. Sometimes the wallabies buried fruit and came back to get it. Hunters would wait where the food was buried.

During the wet season, especially during periods of continuous rain such as are apt to occur in February, wallabies are said to huddle miserably on small ridges or "islands" and are easily approached, either by a single hunter or a number of men who surround it. (It is interesting to note, in this connexion, that the Kugu-Nganychara have standard expressions in their languages to describe a group of men hunting wallabies, as opposed to a single hunter.)

During the dry season wallabies are hunted by individual young men as part of a ceremony called pidhal(m). The ceremony was described by a man from estate X5 in the following terms:

> During kay.man we used to have a wallaby hunt, like a competition. Pidhal umu, wutunda, in _____'s country (X2), on the track straight up from yangku, was a good hunting place in kay.man time. There was plenty of water for everybody. There was a main well there (ngaka pantam mu'am).
>
> In the evening people would start singing, singing pidhal. Not like now; people didn't sing for fighting before. They sang about minya (animals, notably wallabies) or about their country.
>
> In the morning two old men would tell a story.[1]

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1. A formal storytelling situation requires two men: the story-teller himself and a formal respondent who sits facing him.

One of the old men would tell about one of his hunting trips. When people are ready they start rattling their spears. The spears are then all put together in a special place. They all start to sing pidhal mangka then. They sing minha pangku (wallaby). People "mock" (imitate) the wallaby and call out: yo yo yo yo. Then they go off hunting.

The really old people are already out blocking the wells. People can't drink until they get two or three wallabies.

The hunters and their mothers and their big sisters (actual M, Z+ only) all drink before daylight. If a man's mother and sisters drink while he is out hunting he won't have any luck. His mother and sisters watch the sun. About 2 or 3 o'clock they can drink in the camp. There is no hunting then. People start coming back to camp.

The hunting men take their kay.man [wooden disk used for applying gum to spears and woomera] , wallaby tooth [yuku mant, used for grooving the ends of the spears so that the "hook" or bone barb may be attached], string (kuu'-yongk), yuku anycha ("hook") and gum, all carried in a dilly bag (wangga). When a hunter spears a wallaby he cooks it in an earth oven immediately. While it is cooking he has time to repair his spears.

The hunter has to get two wallabies to be able to drink. But in the late afternoon he can drink anyway [i.e., irrespective of whether he has been successful or not].

The same procedure is followed next day, and so on for, say, one week. When the "dance" (ceremony) is finished off, people go back to their own country. Kugu toho-toh people go back to their own country (B1). "Holroyd" people go back home.

Wallabies are also subject to mass drives using fire. These drives occur annually at certain locations, e.g., nga'adha. There, women light a line of fires on the eastern margin of the coastal plain while men wait in the thick scrub on the western margin where, concealed by the smoke, they spear the wallabies. The latter are driven before the fire which is fanned by the south-east trade winds. The women follow the fire picking up small mammals which have been caught in the flames; they also retrieve goannas which have retreated into holes in the ground, thus running,

as informants often stress, the risk of snakebite.

Thomson (1939b: 217) describes another technique in which wallabies are driven from the small patches of scrub on the sand ridges where they have taken refuge during the heat of the day: "There they are driven by hunting parties, imitating the hunting call of the dingo, and accompanied also by dogs, towards hunters hidden in specially constructed hides, from which they are speared." He notes that this technique is only used at the very end of the dry season "when the surrounding country is bare and the wallabies so reluctant to leave the cover of the scrub that they can be driven along the narrow strip of cover into ambush." This technique has not yet been recorded for the Kugu-Nganychara.

Early in the dry season fires are also used to burn relatively small patches of grass. Wallabies are said to be attracted to the fresh green shoots which spring up after the firing. Hunters will approach these patches carefully at known feeding times, e.g., late in the afternoon. Whistling is often used to attract the attention of wallabies which seem on the point of breaking.

Possums were also an important part of the diet (though they have been rapidly abandoned since mission contact). Both men and women would climb trees and poke them out of holes. Bush rats and bandicoots were also obtained; and kangaroos when they ventured into the region.[1] Flying foxes were heavily exploited, shaken down

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1. This comment should perhaps be qualified. Kangaroos rarely venture onto the coastal plains; when observed their presence causes great excitement. However, it is likely that they are more common in the inland division. Nevertheless, no "inside people" have ever indicated to me that the large macropods (cont.)

from where they roosted in the mangroves and clubbed. Spears were also used. Dingos and native cats were also eaten.

Pigs (especially sows)[2] are now commonly hunted and form a staple item in the bush diet. Both in the settlements and in the bush, piglets are stored in pens for later eating. There has been some adaptation of the technology used for hunting these animals. Dogs are used in conjunction with specially designed spears: the "blade spear" consisting of a long flattened metal blade (over 0.5 m. in length) tapering to a point and attached to a shaft made of Hibiscus tileaceus and a "crowbar spear" consisting of a long sharpened metal bar attached to a similar shaft. These spears are considered more effective than the low calibre (.22) rifles which people own.

Birds:

All birds are considered potentially edible (See von Sturmer and Arkwookerum 1978). However, the main species eaten are brolgas, ibis, the various ducks, of which the black duck (Anas s. superciliosa) is the most common, and geese. Jabiru, the sarus crane, the Australian bustard and emu occur more rarely. The eggs of scrub turkeys, scrub hens and geese are also major food items.

Birds were normally stalked, the hunter concealing himself behind a screen of branches held in one hand. For ducks, decoys were made and planted at the edge of swamps or lagoons; the hunter

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1. (Cont) were ever an important or regular feature of their diet. The grey Kangaroo, Macropus robustus, is probably commonest in the rocky terrain at the headwaters of the western rivers, outside the Kugu-Nganychara region.

2. Female animals of all species are preferred to male animals for eating. They are said to be "sweeter". This is conceived by the Kugu-Nganychara almost as a natural law.

hid behind a screen waiting for the birds to land. Alternatively, hunters might wait concealed behind long grass or "bulgru" in the swamps. Men would sometimes hunt brolgas at night, first smearing themselves with mud. The procedure was not without its attendant dangers. In fairly recent (but pre-mission) times a man speared his hunting partner by mistake. During the dry season men would sometimes wait in trees growing on the banks of lagoons and strike the birds with long sticks as they came into land. Other men would chase the brolgas from other waterholes nearby. Jabirus were notoriously difficult to stalk because of their keen eyesight. They could be approached only from either directly in front, or from directly behind.

The geese egg season, at the end of the wet season, was a major event in the yearly food calendar. Some locations were famous for geese eggs, e.g., agu empa, kaha pepen, and other large marshes on the coastal plain. Unlike similar areas north of the Kendall River the eggs could be reached by wading; skinbark canoes were not required. Among the Kugu-Nganychara the gathering of geese eggs was (and is) hedged about with many restrictions, or taboos (See also McKnight 1975).

When the goslings had hatched, and before their plumage had fully grown, they were captured and reared in pens, preparatory to eating. This practice continues today. In late July (1971) I observed quite large but flightless birds captured at thoke and mudhan for this purpose.

Amphibians and reptiles:

Female turtles land along the coast during the dry season (kay.man) to lay eggs which were (and are) dug up and eaten. Turtles found on the beach were killed and eaten; however, they were not

pursued in the open sea. Both freshwater and saltwater crocodiles were staple foods, and people sought their eggs during the wet season. Freshwater tortoises were prized, and both men and women swam for them. In a special ceremony called ambanh.m which was held at inland lagoons during the dry season (kay.man) the female participants collected tortoises and stored them in a large pit in readiness for a final feast day.[1]

Men gathered pythons by reaching into hollow tree trunks or by spearing them (especially in mangrove and vine scrub environments). Water snakes (e.g., the Javan file snake, Acrochordus javanicus) were also important and were collected by both men and women. Severe restrictions surrounded the eating of pythons.

MAYI (Vegetable foods):

The discussion by Thomson (1939b) of the exploitation of vegetable resources among the Wik-Mungkana serves equally well for the Kugu-Nganychara, with regard to the resources, seasonality, and techniques of exploitation. With one or two exceptions, the same vegetable foods occur in both the Archer River and the Kugu-Nganychara regions (see von Sturmer 1978b). However, some additional or reinforcing comments may be made:

(1) The coastal plains are a major source of vegetable foods immediately after the wet season. (See discussion of the link between ceremonial life and economic activities, below). On the coastal plain around Hersey Creek (or the "Thuuk River") waterlilies were available in large quantities after the wet season. Both Thomson and McConnel (see Chapter 3) have stressed the importance of "bulgru" in the diet. It is equally important

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1. Men collected and stored honey.

in the Kugu-Nganychara region. For example, at thoke (on the "Holroyd" and at minha ngakanga (Christmas Creek) "bulgru" covers several hundred hectares. (Its importance as a food item for geese and brolgas must also be noted; brolgas dig for the corms even during the dry season when most of the marshes have dried up. The marshes are thus a focus of economic activities throughout the year.) (See also the discussion of the link between ceremonial life and economic activities, below).

(2) On the coastal ridges, large numbers of fruits become available at the beginning of the wet season (e.g., Eugenia carissoides and E. eucalyptoides). While the period is generally one of relative food shortage, it is a time when children perhaps, for a time, become almost economically independent.

(3) Patches of large yams (Dioscorea transversa) are often controlled and exploited exclusively by men (see discussion of agu panych in Chapter 9).

(4) During the late dry season, people in the Kugu-Nganychara region were perhaps less reliant on the Nonda plum, Parinari nonda, than people north of the Kendall River. I have observed massive quantities of this food collected at Cape Keerweer. However, it has never been suggested to me that it ranked as importantly south of the Kendall River. Trees are relatively infrequent on the coastal ridges. In any case, the well-developed system of dunes and intervening swales probably maintained rootstocks longer through the year than further north (though this has to be tested empirically). In the late dry season

coastal people were apt to move inland, across a coastal plain which is much narrower south than it is north of the Kendall River, into an area which is also much better watered than its northern equivalent. Here waterlilies remained a staple food item throughout the year (and stands of Parinari nonda are more common).

(5) Neither Thomson nor McConnel makes any reference to the use of grains, of which several were employed by the Kugu-Nganychara. Ground into flour they were made into small cakes or loaves.

(6) More importantly, McConnel and Thomson do not refer to food storage among the Archer River people. The Kugu-Nganychara note that at the first rains ("First storm"), "hairy yams" (mayi ka'ara - Dioscorea sativa) and several other rhizomes (mayi munyim, mayi winggu and mayi ompe) are dug up; the new shoots are broken off; and they are stored in dry conditions in the bush houses or humpies, mostly buried under the dirt floor. There they are kept in readiness for the period of vegetable shortage during the wet season. The ripe or green fruit of Parinari nonda are also collected and stored in the humpies.

Native honey and other items:

Insects and larvae are generally unimportant in economic terms. The major exception is native honey, or "sugarbag". Honey is found in a variety of habitats including both mangrove zones and the 'dune woodland'. However, it occurs in much greater quantity in the "bloodwood" or "timber country" inland. A number of different species are recognized, and hives are divided between male and female

depending on the hardness of wax and the supply of honey. Female "sugarbag" - mayi atu kuyu - is described as "rich, with nice soft wax." Male "sugarbag" - mayi atu pama - is described as "not much honey and hard wax". Seasonality is important for it determines the quantity and quality of the honey. When certain flowers are in bloom the honey is avoided for it is believed that it will cause diarrhoea. Nevertheless, it is a major food item. During the late dry season it is collected in vast quantities as part of the ceremony, ambanh.m (see Amphibians and Reptiles, above).

Large scrub snails are eaten inland; although available in vine-forest thickets on the coastal dunes, they are not eaten by coastal people.

Non-food items:

In discussing non-food items I wish to distinguish between two sets of raw materials: firstly, those which are converted into cultural artefacts, either by combination in complex ways with other materials, e.g., in the case of spears, or by being given a repetitive and habitual function, e.g., a baler shell removed from a beach and left as a scoop near a well; and secondly, those which are used in combining or converting other raw materials, but which do not form part of the final product, e.g., firewood. I shall call the first set production resources, and the second set conversion resources. In addition, I discuss a third category, viz., what the Kugu-Nganychara call opar, or "medicine".

(1) Production resources: Under this heading I include the raw materials which are incorporated within fabricated items of material culture. The most important materials are Hibiscus tileaceus, the

long straight branches used as spear shafts and the bark in making a strong string (kuu'-ok.nye); "Lancewood" (Acacia rothii), used for making woomeras, the hard, lower shaft of spears, and spear-prongs; Ironwood (Erythrophloem chlorostachys), used for woomeras and spears (less commonly than "Lancewood"), for gum, and for wooden pounders used in food preparation; "Messmate" (Eucalyptus tetrodonta), the bark used for making containers and shelters of various kinds; and various Melaleuca spp., the bark of which is also used in building shelters. It is worth noting that worked hardwoods are heavily recycled. "Lancewood" and Ironwood sections of spears and woomeras are highly durable, and rarely break. In the case of woomeras they are continually repaired by adding new pegs (from which the spears are launched) and new pieces of shell (the latter are also highly durable and may pass from one woomera to another). In the case of spears, the light Hibiscus (or bamboo) section at the throwing end of the spear frequently breaks; the hardwood section at the opposite end rarely fractures and is simply re-attached to a new shaft. The light shafts become brittle with age; some hardwood sections have been used continuously for thirty or more years.

Various grasses and trees are important for producing string for dilly bags. Wallabies provide bone for spear barbs; teeth which are fitted into small wooden chisels to work wooden implements (yuku kay.man); and sinews (from the tail) to bind spears. Baler shells (Melo spp.) are used for cooking (as containers in which fatty tissues taken from certain fish, notably barramundi, are boiled); pieces of the shell are used to decorate the woomeras; and, most importantly, the shells are used as water containers and scoops for digging out wells. (It is regulatory to have in situ baler shell found alongside all wells.) The large trumpet shell (Tritona sp.) is also used for carrying and storing water.

There is no stone found within the region except at ma.lun, in the bed of the river, and at ku'aanychi, on the coast north of the "Thuuk" River. None of it is workable in terms of a lithic technology. All stone axes, the round stones used for grinding certain vegetable foods, and the small stones flaked for cutting chest and other cicatrices had to be traded in from outside the area. Their region of provenance has yet to be established.

Beeswax is used in hafting axes, for attaching the oval disks of baler shell to woomeras, and in making the watertight sheath into which firesticks are inserted. (It was also used for making small figurines, tops and other toys for children.)

(2) Conversion resources: Firewood is the most important conversion resource. Almost the first task at any campsite is to light a fire. Certain firewoods are preferred on general grounds, e.g., thumu thaynpa and thumu thaynycha ("bush mango"). Others are not favoured, e.g., bloodwoods, ironwood and messmate. (The poor burning qualities of the latter are exploited in the following manner: the bark is stripped and bound up tightly; and the lighted bark bundle can be carried from one campsite to another and save the task of making fire with firesticks.) Old Melaleuca logs are used for heating yellow clay for the production of the "red paint" (wu'u) used in dancing. The Nonda plum (Parinari nonda) is often used during the wet season because of its slow burning qualities.

Antbed is important for cooking (using earth ovens). It does not occur (or only rarely) on the coastal ridges and the bark of a wattle (Acacia sp.) is sometimes used instead. Tea-tree bark (Melaleuca spp.) is used for covering the oven; on the ridges where

bark is not always readily available, palm leaves may be used instead. Inside the oven the meal to be cooked is often laid on beds of leaves, specially chosen to enhance the flavour.

Compacted shell grit and pumice stone from the beaches are used to grind down hard woods, for making spears, woomeras and boomerangs. The large "mudshell" (Geloina sp.) is used as a scraper in manufacturing the same implements.

(3) Opar or "medicine": The term opar, refers both to items used in a western medicinal sense, and to items used in sorcery, love magic, etc. (see Taylor 1977: 425). Some opar are public knowledge. The following are some examples:

> (i) yuku mormon (Vigna marina): sap from the plant is mixed with water (salt or fresh) and applied to the stings from catfish or stingray barbs. If the pain is severe, the sap is mixed with hot water; and roots and leaves are smashed and applied directly to the painful spot.
>
> (ii) "Soapy leaf tree": leaves smashed up and rubbed over the sick person's body.
>
> (iii) "File-leaf tree":
> (a) protection against lightning: used during the wet season when out walking in bad lightning. Leaves stuck to hat (nowadays) or in hair (formerly). As one informant said, "Then lightning can't touch". Also put on the exterior walls of houses, over entrances (doors, windows) "to stop lightning coming in." According to another informant, this information has been transferred northwards from Normanton, through Mitchell River and Edward River, in known historical times. (See earlier discussion under Climate).
>
> (b) sickness: roots of the tree dug up, smashed, mixed with water and rubbed on people suffering from "flu, swellings on legs, feet, etc."
>
> (iv) "Policeman fruit": "One bloke told me to get root, burn it in fire and when it gets cold you can rub it on your face and then nobody will see you; even on horse's face too. (I) tried it once when working at _____ just out from Georgetown; told this by _____ at Aurukun. Rub it on shirt; took cattle back to station; left cattle in paddock,

> and rode back to station. Also rubbed coats on packhorses too. Big mob gambling outside house, open space, they all reckon they didn't see us. But still tracks. When (we) got to (the) yard, rubbed coal off with water, or just rubbed hard so they could see us. But they [i.e., all members of the arriving party] all could see each other before [i.e., while covered in charcoal]." (R.K./Kugu-Uwanh)

Other opar are regarded very much as private knowledge. Informants will point them out with great secrecy. Many plants considered yuku opar are unnamed.

Analysis and Conclusions

(1) Without raising at this point the question of local organization, it is not difficult to see that two different kinds of economy were operating in the Kugu-Nganychara region; a coastal economy, on the one hand, and an inland economy, on the other. Considering the matter simply from the point of view of resources, the coastal region - i.e., the region between the coast and the "timber country" (the commencement of the plant community labelled by Pedley and Isbell 'Open-Woodland') - gives access to a wide range of resources spread through a wide range of environments. Inland the range of environments is much reduced. At another level, it can be argued that the range of resources available inland remains relatively constant throughout the year. For the coast, the situation is very different in this respect. For example, in the early dry season it is possible that the coastal plain provides the bulk of food resources - fish (from fish traps or weirs), geese eggs, and root stocks. However, by the late dry season, especially after it has been fired to enhance mobility and to "harvest" the remaining wallabies, it becomes a virtual desert.

In short, the coastal economy has access to a wide range of resources which fluctuate widely according to seasonal variations and different environments. The inland economy has access to a more restricted range of resources which are less subject to seasonal changes and are constant with regard to environmental distribution.

(2) The wet season is regarded as the harshest period of the year. It is sometimes referred to as "hungry time". On the coast, people took recourse, not only to stored vegetable foods, but also to a number of what were usually considered marginal resources, e.g., bush fruit, succulent herbs, shellfish washed up on the beach by heavy seas, the tops of Pandanus palms (eaten wet season only), scrub turkey eggs, and so on. It is unknown whether food storage was practised inland to the extent it appears to have been practised on the coast. Moreover, it seems that many of the 'marginal' resources may have been unavailable or less common inland. In these circumstances, "inside people" may have relied on a 'normal range' of resources throughout the year. Clearly there would have been variations in the quantity and quality of the resources seasonally available. Moreover, it is likely that the customary (dry season) points of exploitation along the rivers would have been flooded, for parts of the wet season at least. Perhaps exploitation focused on the perched swamps which are situated on the ridges. However, these and other points have to be confirmed.

(3) The late dry season (kay.man) was also a period of vegetable shortage, at least on the coast. Specialised resources and techniques were employed at this time of the year. For example, the roots of two Eugenia species (E. suborbicularis, E. eucalyptoides, but not

E. carissoides) were dug up, crushed with large stones (to ease chewing), and eaten either raw or cooked in the coals.

(4) There are a wide range of techniques employed in exploiting even a single set of resources, e.g., fish. The amount of manpower and labour involved varies considerably. Some techniques require or employ a large body of labour, and provide a large surplus, e.g., organized wallaby hunts (individual hunters), wallaby drives (multiple hunters and the use of fire), and fish poisoning. In many cases they are linked formally with a ceremony (e.g., pidhal.m, for wallaby hunts; and thayje-mongkom, for fish-netting). In other cases, e.g., fish poisoning, the activity exhibits many of the characteristics of a ceremony: the exclusion of women and children from the site of the poisoning; the obligation imposed on young men ready for the "final day"; and the summoning of visitors from neighbouring areas to participate in the final day of feasting.

In ambanh.m, men and women engage in separate activities: men collect honey which is stored in large bark containers and women collect freshwater tortoises which are stored in a large pit dug in the ground. On the "final day" parents of the participants arrive at the site of ceremony and the stored food is distributed at a feast (see Chapter 10, under Ceremonial life).

(5) The ceremonial, or ceremonial-like, activities just discussed focus on the coastal plain, or on the freshwater lagoons at the eastern margin of the coastal plain, or further inland. The activities occur in the (late) dry season, on a fairly regular basis.

The major ceremonies - wanam, kunal.m, and munka - focus

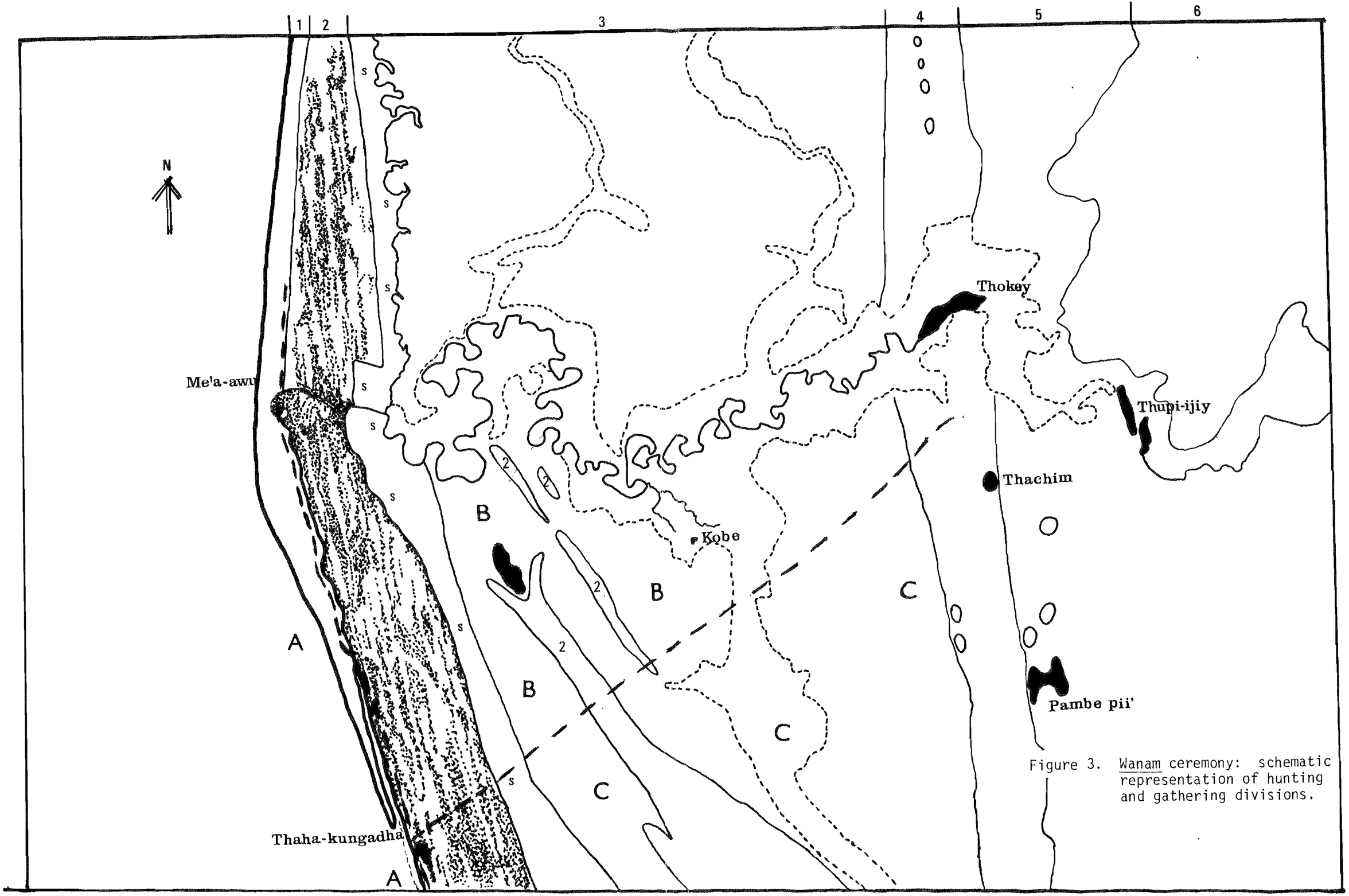

Figure 3. Wanam ceremony: schematic representation of hunting and gathering divisions.

The heavy broken lines leading out from thaha-kungadha mark out divisions A, B and C.

A. Senior men B. Women (and children) C. Initiates (and custodians)

Transect: thaha-kungadha to thupi-ijiy - 8.5 km.

1. Beachfront, foredune
2. Coastal dunes; stippled areas indicate patches of vine scrub; the areas marked (S) on the eastern margin of the coastal dunes constitute a zone of continuous vine-scrub.

   Other areas marked 2 indicate residual beach lines or sandy ridges.
3. Coastal plain; areas enclosed in dotted line are salt pan. River channel lined with mangroves almost to thokey.
4. Sandy ridge; eastern limit of coastal plain. Some perched lagoons.
5. Intermediate zone or corridor between coastal division and inland division.
6. Inland ridges; "bloodwood country".

on the coastal ridges, and they occur immediately at the end of the wet season. Wanam serves as a useful example. The ceremonial centre is at thaha-kungadha, at the mouth of the "Holroyd River". The ceremony is not held regularly, but when it does occur, informants specify that "May is the best month." It draws on people from the "Thuuk River" in the north to "Breakfast Creek" in the south, and from areas immediately inland of the coastal plain. That is, Kendall River people, people from the headwaters of the rivers, and Thaayorre speakers from the south were generally excluded. Other aspects of the ceremony will be taken up under Ceremonial life in Chapter 10. Here I wish to concentrate briefly on the economic activities which surround the ceremony (which lasted upwards of four weeks). The landscape was divided into three divisions. These divisions are represented schematically in Figure 3. Division A covers the beach both north and south of thaha-kungadha. During the ceremony it becomes the exclusive hunting domain of the senior men (pama manu thayan). Their economic activity concentrates on marine fishes. Zone B which covers a large north-eastern sector taking in coastal dunes and swales, the complex of mangrove channels and salt pans in the vicinity of kobe, and part of the coastal plain. This zone was accessible only to women and children. Their economic activities concentrated on yams (obtainable from the coastal dunes and associated scrubs), various root stocks (obtainable from the margins of marshes on the coastal plain), and fish (from weirs constructed across the channels). Zone B takes in the remaining sector, basically to the south and east of thaha-kungadha. This zone was assigned to the initiates and to their custodians (drawn from men who had only passed through the ceremony once before, and were not yet of senior status). Their economic activities concentrated on hunting wallabies. They exploited the landscape as far inland as thupiji.

Several points should be made:

(i) During the ceremony the landscape is divided on a rational basis (i.e., regardless of consideration of ownership, etc.), allowing three sectors of the labour force - viz., senior men, women (and children), and young men - to specialize in activities with which they are habitually associated. The range of activities for the first two categories of people was probably no more than 4 km. and often less; for the final category, the young men, the range was probably 8-10 km. It should be noted that this allocation of the landscape only occurs during the ceremony.

(ii) Although the ceremony does depend on abundant food resources (to support probably over 100 participants for a long period, and to provide for feast day at the conclusion of the ceremony), it does not rely on a single abundant resource (as in the case of pidhal.m or thayje-mongkom, or with fish poisonings), or two major resources (as in the case of ambanh.m). It exploits the whole range of resources. The ceremonies of the late dry season coincide with economic activities which, with group labour, provide a surplus which could scarcely be obtained without co-operative effort, or the efforts of a number of individuals geared towards a single goal. The early dry season ceremonies appear different in this respect. It is a period when food resources are most abundant; and exploitation by small economic units (often no more than the nuclear family) is the norm at this time. Where it might be possible to argue the primacy of economic factors for the late dry season ceremonies, the argument applies less well for early dry season ceremonies which appear to be mainly social in character, though, in the case of wanam, careful attention is paid to economic considerations. However, the difference in the allocation of

economic duties during wanam serves to symbolise the differences of social (or ceremonial) status which apply between the different categories of exploiters. The landscape allows the symbolism to be activated; but it does not generate it. In years other than those in which the ceremony occurs, subsistence strategies would be quite different. The early dry season was normally a period of exploitation and consumption by small, isolated family units.

(6) In daily life there is considerable overlap in the economic activities of men and women. The sexual division of labour is often blurred.

(7) There is some economic specialization. Certain men are famous as hunters, and certain women as gatherers. Great prestige may attach to such people. People may deliberately seek certain game, e.g., ducks, and go to elaborate lengths building decoys and screens. Others will not bother about such time-consuming activities, or will concentrate on other game and other strategies.

Specialization is most easily observed (for it may still be observed today) in material culture. Old men may devote themselves to obtaining ironwood gum, used for fastening spears and woomeras, or to the detailed and difficult work of making nautilus-shell ornaments. Old women may become celebrated dilly-bag makers. Old people in general may be less important in food production but more important in other phases of economic life requiring time, skill and knowledge.

For this reason, and others (see for example, the age-based, or status-based, allocation of duties during ceremonies), it is

legitimate to talk of a division of labour on the basis of age (or status).

(8) Food storage is important on both a short- and a long-term basis.

(9) The distribution of food is hedged round with a number of restrictions. I do not propose treating these restrictions in detail in this work. However, it is worth stating that as an individual gains status these restrictions apply less and less. In general, they apply to parents with young (or unborn) children, children, widows and widowers (for a period), and to food obtained by certain kin. (Correspondingly, individuals have rights over food obtained by certain kin.) With respect to the items restricted, they are in general large specimens of particular species. Occasionally there are species which are subject to blanket restrictions, regardless of the size at which they are obtained. The more common staple foods tend not to be subject to restrictions.

(10) Personality is everywhere imposed within the economic arena. The importance of personal choice and preferences cannot be over-stressed. They affect not only the actual foodstuffs which are sought, but also technological options, e.g., to use or not to use fish traps or bark canoes. Some hunters are known as "loners"; others prefer company. Idiosyncratic features of spears, for example, can serve to identify individual makers; and woomeras are designed to suit the user in terms of length, weight, and right- or left-handedness, as well as taste in decoration.

(11) The notion of personal property is well-developed. Both men and women are responsible for, and control, their own technological

items. Signs may be erected at patches of yams or observed bee hives to indicate prior rights. Landings and wells are also privately owned (see Chapter 9); and some medicinal knowledge is personally and jealously guarded.

(12) There is a strong interdependence between coast and inland in economic terms. A number of food resources are available, or available in large and reliable quantities, only in the one or the other division. For example, coastal people went inland for such items as honey (mostly associated with "bloodwood country") and Nonda plum (as a precursor to the wet season). In addition, the inland division offers more secure supplies of fresh water than the coast. It might be argued that although "inside people" used the resources of the "beach people", and vice versa, the interdependence was based on a desire for diversity and a change of diet, rather than on necessity. In terms of non-food resources the relationship has a more necessary character if only because there are few significant differences in coastal versus inland technologies. The similarities in material culture imply a long history of interaction. Residents of the inland division use baler shell ornaments on their woomeras, orchid bark and "gidgi beads" (Abrus precatorius), all available only on the coast; in addition, they use mudshells for scrapers, shell conglomerate and pumice stone as abrasives, and Hibiscus shafts in manufacturing spears. The coastal people require "lancewood" (Acacia rothii), and various barks and strings, as well as beeswax, from the interior. Evidence suggests that items (other than lithic material, from further east, i.e., "right on top", and possibly bamboo shafts from the north) were obtained through personal effort and in situ rather than through trading relations. There is still gift-giving between friends, e.g., of pieces of baler shell; but there are no trading

partnerships recorded for the area.

This passage serves as a useful introduction to the next chapter which discusses local organization and territoriality. Ideally, and looking at the situation from a coastal perspective, estates would extend inland from the coast along an east-west axis so that they took in the full range of environments and their attendant resources. This would represent a rational allocation of land and resources, and allow each "clan" (or band) to confine its activities to its own land. The latter might be considered expedient on grounds of security and the potential for defense. Moreover, it would offer advantages to hunters and gatherers who require an intensive knowledge of plant and animal behaviour. In this connexion it need hardly be stated that the Kugu-Nganychara are both curious and well-informed about the environment.[1] Of course, other species may be no respecters of man-imposed boundaries. Moreover, man himself, as we shall observe in the next chapter, appears to have more on his mind (and in his biology) than the rational allocation of land.

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1. Moreover, their knowledge extends well beyond what may appear to be purely pragmatic or utilitarian.

Chapter 9 : Territoriality and local organization

> No one can take over this place. This where I born. This country from my father, my father's father. (T.E., Kendall River.)
>
> My grandfather, my father's real father, seized that place. He sat at kunamnga, and blocked that road running up inside to kaha-pepen. He frightened people. He was quick-tempered, a real "bush man" (i.e. sorcerer). (P.A., "Christmas Creek".)

Preamble:

Stanner (1965) introduced the notions of "estate" and "range" into discussions of Aboriginal territoriality. They raise the twin issues of ownership or custodianship, on the one hand, and land use, on the other. Among the Kugu-Nganychara it becomes almost impossible to divorce these two issues even for analytical purposes. Moreover, I have already noted (Chapter 4) that there is a real difficulty, when talking of local organization, in giving priority to locality at the expense of social (and, in particular, familial) organization. This chapter seriously challenges accepted notions of "clan estate". Firstly, there is some evidence that the "estate" as a unitary or isolable tract of land does not always exist among the Kugu-Nganychara; and that, even when it can be established that "estates" as such do exist, it is crucial, in coming to grips with them, to understand that they are internally differentiated in a number of ways, and are dynamic rather than fixed realities. Secondly, there is no strong evidence, at least among the coastal groups, that the "clan" is involved in the actual ownership or custodianship of land. Indeed, there are real difficulties in defining any descent-based corporate group as the effective land-owning unit.

There is a strong patrilineal descent ideology among the

Kugu-Nganychara; consequently corporative structures based on the notion of descent must be considered incipient, or potential realities. However, my argument is that corporations based on descent are unlikely to sustain the intense pressures to which they appear subject among the Kugu-Nganychara: the proprietary and political aspirations of individual entrepreneurs; the conflict between contrasting sets of loyalties - familial versus descent group loyalties; sibling rivalry; and instabilities based on demographic and environmental factors.

The more enduring corporations are based on co-operative economic activities. The land base of these corporations consists of a number of "estates" (in Stanner's sense), generally located on a single river or stream. The land to which members of the corporation have access includes all the major habitats necessary to their survival.

The affairs of the corporation are conducted and organized by individual "big men" or "bosses", acting individually or in concert. I propose calling this corporation a COMPANY, borrowing the term which the Kugu-Nganychara themselves use in English. The use of upper case is meant to distinguish the term, used in its most inclusive sense (to cover a large riverine system), from a number of lower order companies (or constituent companies).

All men and women have rights in land, both of ownership and of transmission. These rights are not fixed, for they vary according to the sex and the status of the individuals involved.

Named locations or sites (agu nhampanyja):

We have already noted that from one perspective the Kugu-

Nganychara have classified the landscape in which they live in terms of a number of named physiographic features and named environments. From another perspective the landscape is seen as dotted with a number of named locations or sites (agu nhampanyja; agu - place, nhampa - name, -nyja - HAVING). Many of these sites are plotted on the maps which comprise Appendix D.

Most sites were recorded during a special mapping trip made between July 1 and July 26, 1971. Assisting me were Mr Peret Arkwookerum, Mr Rodney Karyuka and Mr James Kalkeeyorta, normally resident at Aurukun. Mr Tommy Eileen, Mr Jimmy Kendall and Mr Duncan Holroyd, normally residents at Edward River Aboriginal Community, also helped after we had met them in dry season bush camps (at pangkadha and at thaha-kungadha). Mr Headley Holroyd also accompanied me on a trip to mudhan. Between them they have primary ties to the Kendall, "Holroyd" and "Christmas Creek" areas.

The intention of the mapping trip was not to plot every named site within the region. Its aim was to establish the number of "estates" so that the spatial relations between the "totemic groups" (presumably clans) which owned them could be understood. At an early stage I found the information given by informants rather perplexing. It fitted poorly into the model presented by McConnel for the Archer River people (and, following Radcliffe-Brown, by anthropologists for much of Australia): unitary, discrete "countries" (or "estates") containing "increase sites" (auwa) with an attendant body of ritual controlled and mostly performed by the members of the patrilineal descent group which owned the "country", and, attached to these "increase sites", "totems" (pulwaiya) which served as guardians to the group members or were otherwise closely linked through sen-

timental and other bonds with them. Among the Kugu-Nganychara the notions, kam waya (equivalent to McConnel's pulwaiya), and awu (equivalent to McConnel's auwa), did not neatly overlap except in a few cases, despite the fact that in English both were covered (in a sense, but not altogether, misleadingly) by the term "story". McConnel clearly proceeded (legitimately or illegitimately, we have yet to determine) on the basis that "estates" and the owning "clan" could be specified by reference to either àwu or pulwaiya. This was clearly impossible among the Kugu-Nganychara.

The mapping trip was successful in that it confirmed the "irregular" character of the data I had received from my informants in the settlements. However, it suffered from a number of methodological shortcomings which should be specified:

1) the mapping did not follow a basic principle which I have followed subsequently in various parts of Australia (north of the Archer River on western Cape York Peninsula; on the eastern coast of Cape York Peninsula south of Lockhart; and in Central Australia), viz., that "owners" of sites must be present when the latter are recorded. Everywhere that I have worked there is a rule that 'one must not "talk" for another person's country'. (There is a modification of this rule in Central Australia where people standing in special relationships to the "owners" - among the Aranda these men are called kuṭa ngulạ - are charged with this duty. However, the "owners" themselves are invariably present.) Preparedness to "show" another person's country is tantamount to a claim that it is one's own; or at the very least, that one has a legitimate right to "show" the country.

The same issues are at work among the Kugu-Nganychara. In the circumstances it was surprising that so much information was

forthcoming in such a short space of time. Nevertheless, it does perhaps account for the rather sketchy recording carried out in some areas (though there were other reasons). In some cases (notably "poison country"), sites were deliberately avoided because the "right man" was not present.

2) Because the mapping was conceived of as a survey there was little attention paid to treating "countries" or "estates" as wholes. Consequently, the question of territorial boundedness was inadequately considered. As we shall see, this question poses particular problems among the Kugu-Nganychara.

3) The mapping of sites and "estates" was in its infancy. John Taylor and I had made several short experimental trips out of Edward River in the period September-October 1969. However, the results were rather disappointing.

   For this trip aerial photographs were obtained (taken in August 1969); sites were plotted on sketch maps drawn from the photographs; and in cases where sharp accuracy was required, sites were pinpointed on the actual photographs. Later, all information was transferred directly onto photographic enlargements of the relevant areas. The final maps have been prepared from these enlargements.

   These techniques were reliable and quick. However, they did not permit the detailed layout of sites themselves to be recorded; nor could the relationship between a number of subsidiary sites located within a given site be plotted, e.g., as at pi'am which has a number of awu located within a small area. Moreover, although

information relating to resource availabilities, seasonal usage, and social events, both contingent and habitual, associated with the sites was obtained and borne continually in mind, no systematic approach had been developed to deal with these issues.

In addition to these methodological difficulties there were a number of practical problems:

1) The period of actual mapping was shorter than intended. The time of entry into the region had to be delayed for more than a month. Even so, much of the country was still boggy, and all the coastal streams were still running.
2) The number in the mapping party was limited by the single four-wheel drive vehicle available.
3) Much of the country is difficult of access. The heavily-timbered country inland is mostly impassable by vehicle and will require the use of teams of horses if it is to be mapped properly at some future date. Similarly, much of the coastal strip was inaccessible, either because of melon-hole or gilgai country along the coastal plain, or because of the thickly-vegetated coastal ridges. Thus, most of the sites plotted on the beachline had to be visited on foot; the same applies to sites recorded east of the timber line marking the boundary between coast and inland.
4) Further mapping trips were not really considered because of the conditions under which I was obliged to conduct fieldwork. My teaching commitments meant that almost all fieldwork had to be carried out during the wet season, or during the first half of the year when travel within the region is impossible.

In addition to the mapping trip, other techniques were used to establish "estates". Informants were asked to list off place

names along the coastline. In general, the lists showed a high degree of comparability with respect to the names given and the order in which they were given. In cases where I have not visited these sites, they are assigned an approximate location on the maps. (The greatest error should not exceed 500 m.) Informants were asked to indicate the cut-off points between "estates"; or, more accurately, they were asked to indicate who was "boss" for each site. Apart from problems which will be treated in detail later (related basically to the distinction between agu kunyji, "really country" or "full country", and agu ngalagun, "company land", and the difficulties of defining each with any precision) this procedure was useful for the coastal strip; however, as soon as one moves away from the coast, it is much more difficult to locate sites without actually visiting them. In these circumstances informants were asked to nominate all the named sites which fell in their father's country (agu ngathinam), their mother's country (agu ngathidhenam), etc. This procedure raised the same problems as that raised by the "beach run" procedure. Moreover, in most cases sites elicited in this manner and not visited have had to be left off the maps.

In preparing the maps a number of basic issues and concepts relating to sites became apparent. They are listed under separate headings.

1) The locus of a named site:

In all cases, the sites appeared to have a focal or core area. In other words, place names do not apply to a general area in the sense that, in specifying a particular named location, the emphasis is on delineating boundaries. While there are spasmodic attempts to indicate boundaries, these attempts occur most often when one is walking along a track. It may be indicated that on

this side of such and such a feature, the place (agu) is called one name, and that on the other side, it is called a different name. For example, along the beachfront, casuarinas were sometimes pointed out as marking the limits within which particular place names could be used. However, it did not appear that the trees should be treated as fixed or formal markers; rather, they served to give an indication of the extension of a particular place name and a vague impression of the point of demarcation between it and its neighbouring named location. Moreover, there were never any attempts made to mark the entire perimeter of any named location.

To what then are the names applied? This question may be considered from two points of view: names apply either to some physiographic feature such as a swamp or lagoon, or they apply to a campsite which is itself associated with a particular environmental feature or set of features. An important feature (virtually universal) is the presence of a watersource such as a creek, swamp or lagoon, or a well. This fact is reflected in the frequent use of prefixes such as ngaka- - water, ngaka pantam - well, agu pambe - round swamp, etc.

Sometimes watersources within a single named site may be distinguished from each other and ranked hierarchically. In other words, one watersource may be regarded as primary and other(s) as secondary (i.e., they serve as sub-foci). For example, the two wells at thant.na are referred to as thant.na putham (described as "that well comes in front") and thant.na kuyiðam (described as "comes behind").

Another good example is a set of swamps referred to collectively

as thijila. Informants state that the name applies properly speaking to the largest lagoon, for the others dry up.

2) The meaning of place names:

Informants take two opposed stances when asked to translate the meaning of place names. Generally, older informants will interpret a question of meaning as relating to the historical (or "story") significance of the site to which the name applies. They are generally unwilling (though not systematically so) to provide translations of the actual names. Younger informants are more prepared to provide such translations, but the latter have to be treated cautiously for they often involve false etymologies.

A useful approach which might have been used would have been to ask what the names were called (or would be called) in another language, e.g., Wik-Mungkana. Kugu-Nganychara informants are prepared to translate Wik-Mungkana or other names found north of the Kendall River into their own languages. There are few cases where there are multiple names for a single site. The local version tends to be accepted throughout the whole Kugu-Nganychara region. There are a few exceptions, notably in the case of awu (see later).

It is likely that almost all names are potentially analysable. On the basis of those for which translations have been obtained, place names may be classified as falling into the following categories:

(i) Names which, at another level, label general environmental features. A good example is agu empa. The term may also be used to describe any environment of the type in which agu empa (as a named location) is situated and to which its name applies. (The primacy of its application - either

to a general environment, or to a particular location which is considered the primary exemplar of such an environment - would have to be determined through comparative linguistic work. If the term, or close cognates of it, can be found over wider areas and in many languages the evidence would suggest that the direction of application is from general environment to precise location. The contrary argument could only be sustained if there were evidence to suggest great environmental stability at this particular site.)

(ii) Names which use a distinctive feature of the site to distinguish it from sites given a similar classification from an environmental point of view. For example, the names applied to swamps frequently consist of the general term for swamp (agu pambe) combined with a special feature, e.g., a single tree or an unusual tree growing there, to indicate the particular swamp involved.

(iii) Names which describe a natural feature of the site (without specifying the dominant physiographic feature of the site), e.g., pimpa maaya (pimpa - bullrushes, maaya - cobwebs).

(iv) Names which record events, e.g., where certain birds were observed (e.g., wewe - "crow place", madhan - "sea pelican place", etc.); where dogs performed certain actions (e.g., ku'a-l-wun.n, "the place where the dog was sleeping"; ku'a-aynychi, "the place where the dog dug a hole"). Sometimes these actions are considered habitual, e.g., (agu) minha ngakanga, "the place where the brolgas come for water" (in the dry season).

(v) As a special subset of the latter we can include awu. Awu record both particular events and habitual associations

(and mediate between the two). For example, minha kumadhu-awu not only records an actual event (the place where the two kaha-(k)ungken brothers dropped a saltwater catfish), but it constitutes in itself an habitual association (i.e., the place where saltwater catfish are always "found"). (See also discussion under 3, Status of sites.)

A comparison between principles (iv) and (v) demonstrates clearly the difference between 'meaning' and 'translatability' among the Kugu-Nganychara. It would be possible to envisage a site called ku'a-awu (indeed, there is a site by this name on the Archer River - WM. ku'a-awa, "dog story"). The latter would be considered meaningful or significant; whereas ku'a-l-wun.n, 'the place where the dog slept' (a single and non-replicated event) is considered meaningless, "just a name".

3. Status of sites:

(1) Camping sites: most sites may be classified as camping sites or "camping places", i.e., agu nhakun. They are described as agu wunana (wun- - vb. sleep). As this name suggests, the defining feature is whether people sleep there or not. Some of the factors determining the choice of camping places are as follows:

i. The permanence and quality of the water supply. Certain sites have water throughout the year. At other sites, water is only seasonally available. During the mapping trip, "milky water" (water carrying a heavy clay sediment) was given as one of the reasons for rejecting mampem as an overnight camping place. On another occasion, during the wet season, heavy seas inundated the only freshwater available along several miles of coastline.

The whole camp drank very brackish water for the best part of two days - albeit reluctantly - without contemplating a shift of camp. (Although the camp was near the mouth of the Archer River, the members of the party were all Kugu-Nganychara speakers.) Water is certainly a crucial factor in the choice of campsite during the late dry season.

ii. Protection from the weather. This factor is especially important during the wet season. The strong north-westerly winds, wind-blown spray and heavy squalls of rain made camping along the exposed beachfront impossible. People tended to take refuge in the scrubs (e.g., kulinychan). As shelters had to be built, access to building materials - cabbage tree leaves, tea-tree bark of "messmate" bark - was an important subsidiary factor at this time of the year.

During the cool months of the year people would often camp on the beach itself; however, strong westerly winds (especially agu pupim) would force them to take refuge behind the frontal dune. This of course only involved minimal adjustments within a single site.

iii. Freedom from flooding. This factor was important only during the wet season and the months immediately following its cessation (i.e., oynychen ngaka thangku). Camping places free from flooding and well drained were restricted to the ridge systems on either side of the coastal plain, and the heavily-timbered ridges of the interior. Thus, the coastal plain marked a major hiatus between the two zones of wet season residence. People camped either on the coast or inland.

Another subsidiary factor which might be considered is the question of mobility. People would have been unlikely to choose wet season campsites where they would have been cut off totally from external social contacts. Against this, it is worth noting Sharp's description of wet season camps further south down the Gulf (1937: 13-14) in which he stresses the relative sedentariness of wet season camps and the relative freedom from "intruders". The whole impression is one of limited mobility. Kugu-Nganychara informants stress the careful selection of wet season campsites, as they do the importance of campsites with good fresh-water during the height of the dry season (agu kay.man).

iv. The availability of food resources. A number of sites are celebrated for abundance of food resources (sometimes seasonally determined, as with sharks at kobe). Certain campsites are associated with major flying fox colonies; others are noted for their good fishing ("People always come here for fish"), abundance of "bulgru", waterlilies, yams and so on. Such sites may be associated with particular exploitative strategies such as fish poisoning, netting, and so on.
However, it is rare that a camping site is associated with a single abundant resource. Favoured sites will offer a range of abundant resources, a wide range of perhaps less abundant resources, and easy access to other sites where particular resources may be available. The question of range ought not to be separated from the question of food availabilities.

v. Availability of other (non-food) resources. Easy

access to firewood, and the basic requirements for cooking - tea-tree bark and "ant-bed" (pi'i) - are important considerations. However, local adjustments may be made to cover deficiencies. For example, termite mounds are rare on the coastal ridges, and thus the "ant-bed" normally used in pit ovens may not always be available. In these circumstances, the bark of an Acacia species which retains heat for a long period when burnt, or lumps of shell conglomerate, may be used as substitutes. Lack of firewood certainly limits the possibility of camping on the coastal plains. People tend to retreat to the ridges to the east or to the west of the plain. (This is reflected in the relative poverty of place names for the coastal plain.)

Items such as spear handles, ironwood gum, and so on can be found within easy range of a number of campsites, and probably had little influence on the choice of actual campsites.

vi. Freedom from vermin. The presence of mosquitoes no doubt influenced the choice of campsite, especially after the wet season. Similarly, as the tides rise during late kay.man and during thutpam, "first storm", and drive mosquitoes and sandflies out of the mangroves, vermin may well be an influencing factor. However, with respect to major campsites, they may occasion only temporary shifts, either to different sites or within the actual camping area. For example, on the beachfront people may move out onto the exposed beaches. Alternatively, rings of fire can be lit to

keep mosquitoes at bay; and certain firewoods are known for the deterrent odour of their smoke.

Venomous snakes are always feared, and great attention is paid to clearing the camping area of grass. The heavily-grassed coastal plains (and their heavily cracked soils) are not favoured for camping for fear of snakes. Grim descriptions are given of people sitting on the east of the plain watching snakes rise up out of cracks in the plain and wave about, silhouetted against the setting sun. Many people have in fact been bitten by snakes (especially women gathering rootstocks at the margin of swamps); and there are many deaths by snake bite recorded in genealogies (including deaths in three successive generations in one family). Consequently, the fears are based in real experience.

Dense pockets of vine scrub are not favoured for camping, again for fear of snakes. Some informants express revulsion at the idea of walking through vine scrub at night. They fear that a python will drop on them. (Near Cape Keerweer I was with a party encamped on the beachfront. No one could be induced to pass through the vine scrub, even in a party and with torches, to reach a swamp - the only source of water - on its eastern margin, despite the powerful arguments proferred by almost everyone: immediate thirst, and the prospect of an early start in the morning if water were obtained in the dark.)

Leeches are relatively rare. People will avoid camping near leech-infested swamps if possible. Hornets, "hairy caterpillars", and green ant nests will cause readjustments within a camping site.

vii. Shade trees (yuku wiba): Shade is an important factor in the choice of campsites among the Kugu-Nganychara. People avoid sitting in the sun whenever possible. Actual sleeping areas are normally associated with thick bushes or good shady trees. If these are inadequate, shades made of Eucalyptus spp. saplings are quickly erected. Trees do not only offer shade; they also serve as storage areas. Food can be jammed in tree forks to keep it out of the reach of the dogs, and, covered with a piece of bark, will normally be safe from crows even while people are absent from the camp.

viii. The quality of the surface for sleeping. The favoured sleeping surface is sand, either on the beaches, or on the ridges, or, in the interior, on the large sandbanks left by the retreating floodwaters. In the environmental zone classified as yeyom there is also a dusty, sandy surface (agu pork.l) considered good for camping: pork.l agu wunana, 'sandy, dusty place used for camping', e.g., at omom. People customarily dig a shallow trench in the soft surface. These trenches remain visible long after, especially on the "woodland dunes" where there are distinct depressions around all shrubby patches within campsites.

There is a basic weakness in attempting to establish the location of campsites on deductive grounds and, even more, the location of preferred campsites. The fact is that not all possible campsites are occupied; and people often choose campsites on the basis of considerations which, from a utilitarian viewpoint, may appear quite irrational. The question of aesthetic and sentimental criteria has not been raised. Yet it is likely that in defining any site as "home", it is precisely these factors - evolving and modified themselves through a long history of human occupation - that may be crucial. For example, on the "Thuuk River" one old man camped at a particular site and decided never to move again. He became so associated with the campsite that his personal name disappeared in favour of the place name. People visiting ku'a-aynychi were visiting him as well as the place. The one implied the other. It is unlikely that this association will be forgotten for a long time. Moreover, there is no need to see it as an isolated case.

When we are talking about a living population the choices of campsites made by them are simply (or largely) within a repertoire of choices transmitted to them from the past. Thus the question should not be approached as though it were a situation of 'first choice'. The Kugu-Nganychara landscape is itself a cultural fact. In simple terms, it is useful to see the landscape as domesticated. Clearly, domesticated campsites offer vast advantages over non-domesticated campsites. Houses have already been built, tracks have been constructed, undergrowth has been cleared (particularly conspicuous in patches of thick vine scrubs where not only the understory but even the large trees of the canopy have been removed), hooks are planted ready in the sand for people to hang their dilly-bags on, wells have been dug and their reliability is known, the

resource potential of the site is well-known, and people in time acquire their own private niches within the greater campsite (e.g., their own shade trees which become associated with them). In short, the landscape is not only well-known, it is personalized.

I was struck during a mapping trip in Eastern Cape York Peninsula by the behaviour of the Aboriginal members of the party during the first few days of camping at a particular location. Children were continually scolded not to venture too far from the domestic hearth, barely 20 m. in any direction. Each day the circle widened, and in about three days all injunctions had been forgotten. The same is true on the western side of the Peninsula (and no doubt everywhere). The security given by knowledge of a landscape is considerable; and vast expenditure in manpower is sacrificed to maintain it, e.g., preparedness to walk further to go hunting, to dig deeper wells, or to collect firewood, etc.

This discussion is not intended to diminish the importance of the campsite as a resource base. However, I wish to stress the importance of past choices, past procedures and sentimental bonds (and ideas of what constitutes a 'good camping place') as part of the material conditions under which people conduct their daily affairs. The habitual character of certain campsites, or the habitual use of certain resources (food and non-food) and river crossings (agu umpu), are culturally recognized by the Kugu-Nganychara. Such sites are referred to as agu mu'am, described in English as "We been use that place from start". Shifts in classification are less likely to arise through an ongoing, systematic re-examination of the way in which the landscape should rationally be exploited, as through the failure of sites classified as agu mu'am 'to produce

the goods'. Alternatively, sites may be re-classified because of shifts in the social universe.

The most spectacular case is the abandonment of campsites after a death. (One must contemplate their almost permanent abandonment after a major social disaster, e.g., a major fight, or multiple deaths during a cyclone, etc.) At a less dramatic level, the people controlling a particular site may become socially unattractive, or there may be demographic shifts of varying degrees.

Against sites which are regularly used, there are many sites which are used infrequently, e.g., during particularly good (or bad) seasons. Good examples of such marginal sites are encountered in the next category, viz., "dinner camps".

(2) "Dinner camps": This English term is used to describe sites where people rarely if ever camped (i.e., slept overnight); rather, they were places where people rested en route from one major camp to another, or where people cooked food, if they were out hunting, before returning to the main camp. Such sites are described in Mu'inh as agu wiba, nga'a minh kamben (wiba - shade, nga'a - fish, minh - (other) meat foods, kamb - vb. cook), 'a shady place for cooking fish or other meat'. An example is puuny (pala kuwa), on the track running between the coast and pepen on "Christmas Creek".

(3) Cremation centres: There are a number of sites scattered along the coastline classified as agu thumu munt (thumu - fire, munt - charcoal) where formerly the mummified bodies of the deceased were cremated. After cremations these sites

were closed to use for as long as a year. Examples: yawu(ng), (thumu) impa ("Christmas Creek"); pedbede. These sites are considered to be of special significance, and fall under the general rubric of "story places".

(4) Specialized resource sites: We have already noted that certain sites are renowned for their abundant sources of particular food items at certain times of the year. For example, inyenge, on "Christmas Creek", is invariably associated with the flying foxes which "camp" there; kobe, on the "Holroyd", is associated with "freshwater sharks", which are easily exploited there in the early part of the dry season (oynych.n); po'onh, on the Kendall River, is also famous for its flying fox colony (minha wuki, agu mu'am); and nga'adha is always associated with the wallaby drive conducted there during the late dry season (minha pangku, agu mu'am).

The resources need not be food resources only. For example, certain sites may be specialized sources of spear handles, or "red paint" (wu'u), etc.

Some sites may be associated with a number of abundant resources (and hence exploitative techniques), e.g., thupiji, foodstuffs: wildfowl, fish, mussels; non-food resources: tea-tree bark; specialized exploitative techniques: nga'a yukanga (trees used for spearing fish during the height of the flooding), trees used for spearing brolgas.

Sites with major permanent or recurrent resources (or associated

with particular exploitative techniques) may be classified as agu mu'am.

(5) Awu: The activities conducted at these sites (and the question of their "ownership") will be dealt with later. Some preliminary remarks may be made here:

i. We have already noted that the term awu is equivalent to the Wik-Mungkana term auwa (properly aaka awa);

ii. The term has dual, but clearly related, senses: firstly, it applies to a particular site, associated mostly, but not exclusively, with a natural species; secondly, it can apply to any regular activity or habitual association. The sense in which these two meanings are linked can be seen most clearly perhaps in a standard joke which I had with one of my informants. Every time we encountered a place where a wild pig had been wallowing, one of us would exclaim: minha piki awu, or minha nhintan awu (piki, nhintan - pig).

iii. Sometimes the name of the awu is assigned to the whole site (including camping places), not just the particular spot which marks its focal point. Examples: thumba-awu (thumba - "freshwater garfish"), kumudhu-awu (kumudhu - "saltwater catfish"); me'a-awu (me'a - mosquito); and nga'a wachin-awu (wachin - barramundi). In other cases it is subsumed under a separate place name, e.g., nga'a munda-awu (munda - "shovel fish") located at mundam; thugu ngamba-awu (Iy. ngamba - black swamp snake), located at oygo; and wongbe-awu (wongbe - rhinoceros beetle), located at thop.n.n. Frequently there are a number of awu associated with a particular

named site: e.g., wech-awu (wech - dilly-bag), and nga'a-awu (nga'a anycha thupan - "salmon"; nga'a pawe - "saltwater catfish"), both associated with waalang; and marêch-awu/pand-awu (Iy. marech, pand(mu) - "sweetheart") and thata-awu (Iy. thata - frog), associated with thupiji.

These names can be used to specify the focal points located within a more inclusively named site; and it is sometimes difficult to know whether to assign them a separate status or not. The principle followed here has been to determine whether my informants subsume a particular awu under a more general place name, e.g., x-awu is at agu-y; or whether they give it an independent status as a place name (i.e., "name himself", e.g., agu nhampa punhtha-thayji-awu).

(6) Ceremonial centres: There are a number of camp sites which also serve as the centre of ceremonial activities. It is useful here to distinguish between site-specific ceremonies, viz., wanam, kunalam/anychalam, and munka; and ceremonies which are not site-specific, viz., pidhal.m, thayje-mongkom (thaajum), and ambanh.m. Wanam has its ceremonial centre at thaha-kungadha; kunalum/anychalam has its centre at yangku; and munka has its centre at thugu (just north of yangku). The other ceremonies can be held at a number of sites, in fact, wherever the resources on which they depend can be exploited easily. With the former, the actual dance ground (where the formal parts of the ceremonies are performed) is often referred to as awu, e.g., wanam-awu.

We could place one or two other sites in a similar category: viz., minha kor'a-awu (kor'a - brolga), at agu manu umu (on "Christmas Creek"); and manu pachingu (on the coast between waalang and thiji). The former is the dance ground for a dance style relating to brolga, called paynycha pinpan.m (paynycha - dance, pinp- - vb. jump). It is sometimes known as paynycha kor'am. Its ceremonial status is dubious; certainly it is not to be ranked alongside wanam or the other major ceremonies. With respect to manu pachingu, there is a well-defined circular dance ground of the munka-type at this site. It is said to have been created by "diver" (black cormorant) for a munka ceremony. However, he was unable to rally support from his potential performers who carried on down the coast to participate in a munka ceremony at paynycha peena, south of the Chapman River in Thaa'yorre territory.

As a general point, it is notable that place names, or named sites, are densest along the coast and along the watercourses. Density falls off dramatically on the coastal plain and as one moves inland. Density is no doubt at least in part a function of environmental factors, and it is reasonable to infer that human activity was, by and large, at its most intense where there are most names.

Above the level of sites, the countryside is classified in a number of ways. Firstly, there is a strong east-west division; secondly, there is a strong set of riverine groupings.

East-West division:

The general area can be divided in a number of ways. There is a major conceptual distinction between west and east, i.e., between kuwa and kawa. Going "down" always means going west, towards the beach. People talk about the coastal zone as "kuwa-side", i.e., from the beach extending inland to the coastal ridge (where the first bloodwood trees are encountered); from this point inland the country is referred to as "kawa-side". People are divided between kuwa-side and kawa-side, between "beachside" people (pama kuwa yi'i) and "on top" or "top-end" people (pama an pak).[1] The same applies to plants, animals and sites. Though it is less commonly verbalized in this form, the distinction may be expressed in terms of saltwater versus freshwater.

The point is worth making that in moving between east and west, especially between the coast and a point, say, 10 to 15 km. inland, the traveller crosses all the most distinctive environmental zones (see Chapter 8). Further inland the landscape is much less sharply differentiated. There it is noticeable that place names focus on the rivers which serve as corridors through countryside which is conceptually as well as in reality without conspicuous or easily isolable features. In fact, it is what we might call a generalized environment. Inland, directionality (away from the rivers) soon becomes almost irrelevant. The human exploiter is likely to encounter the same range of environments endlessly repeated in whatever direction he chooses to head. This is true even of the rivers. The riverine topography and resources change little 60 km. inland as opposed to 15 km. inland.

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1. The term opoja is also used to refer to Iiyanh-speakers ("inside people") on the Kendall and "Holroyd" rivers, and to Pakanh-speakers on the upper "Christmas Creek."

In a sense the same can be said of a set of north-south axes with the coastal division confined to any one of the broad environmental zones (each of which constitutes a specific environment, or a restricted set of environments) - beach front, coastal ridges, coastal plain, and even the sand ridge which marks its eastern boundary - presents a roughly similar picture from one point to the next. The coastal plain as it approaches the Kendall River presents a similar appearance as at "Christmas Creek" or even south of "Breakfast Creek". The beach ridges near Moonkan Creek seem to differ little from those near the Kendall River mouth; and so on. Consequently, it is scarcely surprising that people, animals or plants are not ordered on north-south axes. Sites obviously can be located north or south (or east or west) of each other. (Indeed, the Kugu-Nganychara have an extremely fine set of directionals. A speaker literally has to orient himself before speaking. Even simple propositions habitually include a directional marker.) More importantly, however, in indicating the location of a site, informants will describe it as "this side" or "other side" of a particular river. Rivers also serve as a major focus for organizing people and economic activities. Given that a person moving even a few kilometres east or west within the coastal division has access virtually to all the different environments available 70 km. or so in any direction, it is not surprising that rivers, themselves intersecting these zones in an east-west direction but also introducing a set of special riverine environments (estuaries, mangrove zones, gallery forest, deep permanent lagoons, etc.) should serve as foci of human activities.

Riverine groupings:

People are classified and classify themselves according to the river or watercourse on which their "estate" is located. It is

legitimate to talk of the "Kendall River mob", the "Holroyd mob" and the "Christmas Creek mob". These groupings are seen as having a social as well as a geographical reality. To give some simple examples, terms such as "Holroyd mob" and "Kendall mob" are invoked when explaining present-day fighting at Aurukun. (North of the Kendall River "mobs" continue to be classified according to rivers or streams. Thus there is the eeRmangk or "Knock River mob", the yu'ungk or Kirke River "mob", the Love River "mob", the Archer River "mob" and so on.) Moreover, at Edward River people drawn from a number of different estates use Holroyd and Kendall as English surnames. (Further south, Thaa'yorre and Kuuk-Yak speakers use Edward, Coleman and Melaman as English surnames, drawn from Edward River, Coleman River, and Melaman Creek respectively.)

It should not be suggested that these groupings are simply recent phenomena which have arisen out of the contact situation or the demands of settlement life. Were this true, it would be difficult to explain the principles on which these groupings were based did they not pre-date the contact situation. Moreover, they are marked in a variety of ways within the languages; and informants are able to re-create the main elements of economic (and social) life along the rivers. The notion that people "belong to one river" is a powerful organizing principle.

People from the lower Kendall River are referred to as wa'awa pukam wakanh, "Big River mob" or 'people who "run around" the big river'. People from the lower "Holroyd" are referred to as pama thaha-kungadha wakanh, an expression in which thaha-kungadha, at the mouth of the river, serves as a cover term for the whole lower river. The same principle applies in the case of the expression,

pama agu waalang wakanh, in which waalang, at the mouth of the river, serves as a cover term for the lower reaches of "Christmas Creek". The people from this region, "from pepin down to the saltwater" can also be referred to as pama thaynycham wakanh; thaynycham is stated to be the "proper name" of the river.

In addition a number of less important systems can be isolated. People from "King River" or "Thuuk River" are referred to as wa'awa mepenh wakayin, or wa'awa woynyo wakayin (Uw. mepenh, woynyo - small), "Small River people" (in comparison with the "Big River" or Kendall River people to their north.

As should be clear from some of the preceding discussion, a distinction is made within riverine systems between the lower reaches and the upper reaches. For example, upstream from kute, the Kendall River people are referred to as pama wo'orom punychan (wo'orom - term applied to the river upstream from this point, punych- - vb. "come from"). To some degree, this applies to each river, such that there is a parallel series of "Bottom-end" people on the lower reaches of each river, and "Top-end" people on the upper reaches. The "Bottom-end" people speak the highly-differentiated coastal languages; the "Top-end people" speak the very slightly differentiated inland languages. In fact, with the exception of the extreme southeastern corner, they all speak Wik-Iiyanh.

Given this overall situation, I have divided the Kugu-Nganychara region up into a number of zones: Kendall River (K); "Thuuk River" (T); "Holroyd River" (H); "Christmas Creek" (X); and "Breakfast Creek" (B). The letters enclosed in brackets are abbreviations which will be used where necessary in the text and in tabular and

synoptic presentations. A special abbreviation, KS, applies to people with territorial claims south of the Kendall River in Zone K. Similarly, KN indicates the region north of the Kendall River. Moreover, when it is necessary to distinguish the upper from the lower reaches of a particular river, this will be by indicating a capital U to the zone symbol, e.g., the abbreviation KU stands for Kendall River - upstream. There is a case to be made for adding an additional zone, focused on yangku, located on the coast between waalang and thaha-kungadha. Additional research may confirm the "distinctiveness" of this zone. However, data from the region are somewhat muddled, possibly because, as I have already mentioned, the Kugu Yi'anh/Kugu Mangk speakers who are the acknowledged "bosses" of yangku are considered socially marginal (a phenomenon I shall attempt to account for later, in Chapter 11). For present purposes, it can be confirmed that people from yangku (and from piching) are frequently said to come from "Christmas Creek". For these reasons, I have included yangku within Zone X as a sub-zone.

All zones contain a number of sub-zones. Upstream from pi'am mangk.m, the Kendall River is lined with extensive patches of bullrushes (agu pimpa), and thick gallery forest (agu thudban). This sub-zone is referred to as pimpa,tha'u wakanha,thudban. South of the Kendall River, people who frequent pi'am, an important lagoon, are referred to as pama weynka konyjen (weynka - bank, konyjen - plant environment described by Pedley and Isbell as dominated by Melaleuca viridiflora and Petalostigma banksii).

On the "Holroyd", people whose activities focus mainly on thupiji are called pama koynyche wakanh. To the west of them, people who exploit the coastal plain in the region south of kekendha

and round thaha-kumban are referred to as pama empa waya wakanh (empa - coastal plain, waya - bad, no good). Here the coastal plain is largely bare clay pan.

In zone X, the large marsh named agu empa is famous for its geese eggs. People who use this site are called pama agu empa wakanh. Moreover, the clear land that people follow down towards the coast from pepen is said to have been "left" by the old lady who created ma'a-akam, a set of songs and dances related to mortuary ritual (see under Ceremonial life in Chapter 10). This clear land is referred to as agu pampa, and the people who frequent it, pama pampa punychan.

In a similar way, other tracts of land are said to have been shaped in their present form by "stories" (see, for example, the story of the kaha-(k)ungken brothers who created the wanam ceremony in Chapter 10). The "King" or "Thuuk" River is said to have been created by the wanderings of a dog; thus, people from this riverine system may be referred to as pama uke ku'an wanta (ku'a - dog, dingo, want- - vb. leave). People south of "Breakfast Creek" are referred to as pama agu pinychi wanta (or pama agu pinychi wanta), 'people from the country "left" (want- - vb. leave) by saltwater crocodile'. (See McConnel 1957: 99-102, for two versions of relevant stories.) Minha pinychi, the saltwater crocodile, "finished off" at agu ithang, just to the south and inland of the mouth of Moonkan Creek. As the injured crocodile travelled downstream, the threshing of his tail created the complex system of anabranches, overflow channels and small circular waterholes which characterize the country between "Breakfast Creek" and "Moonkan Creek".

It is worth noting that in the "Thuuk River" system fresh water is notoriously scarce during the late dry season. For this reason, the area is often referred to as agu ngaka uthung (ngaka - water, uthu - dead). It lacks the lines of parallel coastal ridges which provide abundant freshwater elsewhere. Moreover, there are no large permanent lagoons in the immediate hinterland. It is "dry country". For this reason it provides a clear demonstration of the necessity of what we might call estate interdependence.

Before dealing with this question in any detail, I need to introduce a number of important Kugu-Nganychara concepts. They include agu kunyji ("full country"); agu pibinam or agu ngathinam ("country from father"); agu ngathidhenam ("country from mother"); agu ngalagun ("company land"); and agu koyenyjam (birth place).

(1) Agu kunyji, "full country" versus agu pibinam, "country from father":

The term, agu kunyji, glossed as "full country", is applied to a site or set of sites over which a particular individual or a particular congeries of individuals has exclusive rights of control. Primary rights in land are transmitted to an individual from his or her father. Land transmitted in this manner can thus be referred to as agu pibinam (pibi - F) or agu ngathinam (ngathi - F) (Uw. agu ngaychinam; ngaychi - F). Sometimes it will be expressed as being transmitted from FF (e.g., Uw. agu pama muwa ngathake ngathurumm; pama muwa ngathake - man - old - B- (=FF), ngathurum - I sing. ABL., -M - ABL., 'My country from my father's father').

It might be thought that agu kunyji and agu pibinam are simply alternative ways of talking about the same thing. In fact, their referential range appears to be somewhat different. The term

agu kunyji is contrasted with agu ngalagun, glossed as "company land". Sites designated by this term may still be classified as agu pibinam. In short, agu pibinam is a more inclusive term than agu kunyji.

Agu ngalagun, or "company land", refers to a site or a set of sites, rights over which are shared by two or more individuals, or two or more congeries of individuals. In addition, each individual (or congeries of individuals) claims other sites as his (or its) designated agu kunyji.

That is, individuals have rights over two categories of sites. They have exclusive rights over sites designated agu kunyji and shared rights over sites designated agu ngalagun. Rights to both categories are transmitted by a man to his actual children; thus, sites designated agu kunyji and agu ngalagun may both be classified as agu pibinam.

With respect to agu ngalagun, the example most commonly given by informants relates to sites located along a river or other watercourse. (In most cases, estates do not cross the major watercourses, at least where they run through well-defined channels.) The situation may be diagrammatized as follows:

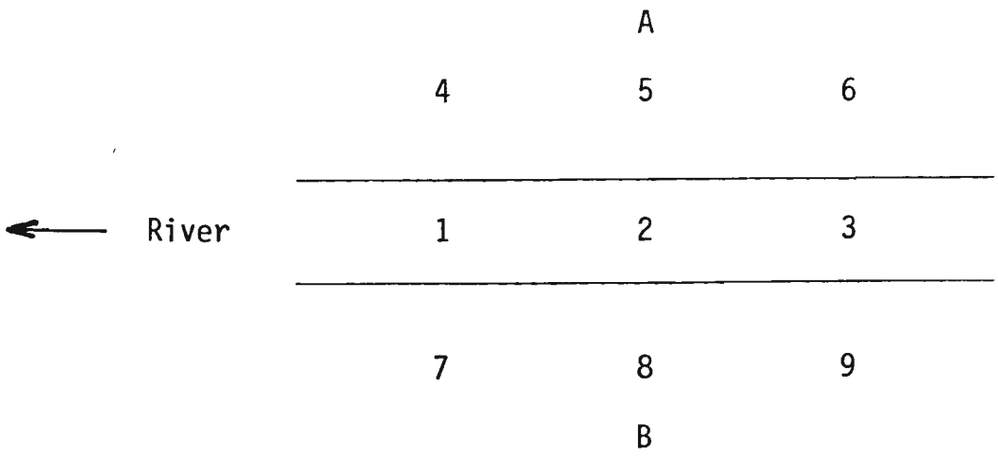

Figure 4. Agu ngalagun (elementary).

The numbers represent named sites. Sites 4, 5, and 6 are sites designated agu kunyji with respect to an individual or congeries of individuals, here labelled A. Correspondingly, sites 7, 8, and 9 are sites designated agu kunyji with respect to an individual or congeries of individuals, here labelled B. Sites 1, 2, and 3 are agu ngalagun with respect to both A and B.

In practice, where there is a major impediment to travel, it may be possible to indicate precise limits to the area designated agu ngalagun. In the case of a major watercourse, one bank may be designated agu kunyji with respect to one individual (or a congeries of individuals), and the other bank may be designated agu kunyji with respect to another individual (or congeries of individuals). For example, at waalang, one individual designates the northern bank as his agu kunyji, and another individual designates the southern bank as his agu kunyji. To give a second example: above thumba-awu, on the "Holroyd", the northern bank is clearly agu kunyji to one congeries of individuals, and the southern bank agu kunyji to another congeries of individuals, although place names along the river apply equally to both banks. The river itself is agu ngalagun. The two congeries of individuals may refer to each other as pama agu ngalagun, i.e., people who share a common boundary. Such an aggregation may be referred to in English as a "company".

In other cases, the dividing line may be less clear cut. This is particularly so in cases where there are no pronounced natural boundaries. For example, boundaries are more blurred moving upstream or downstream along the rivers. See Figure 5.

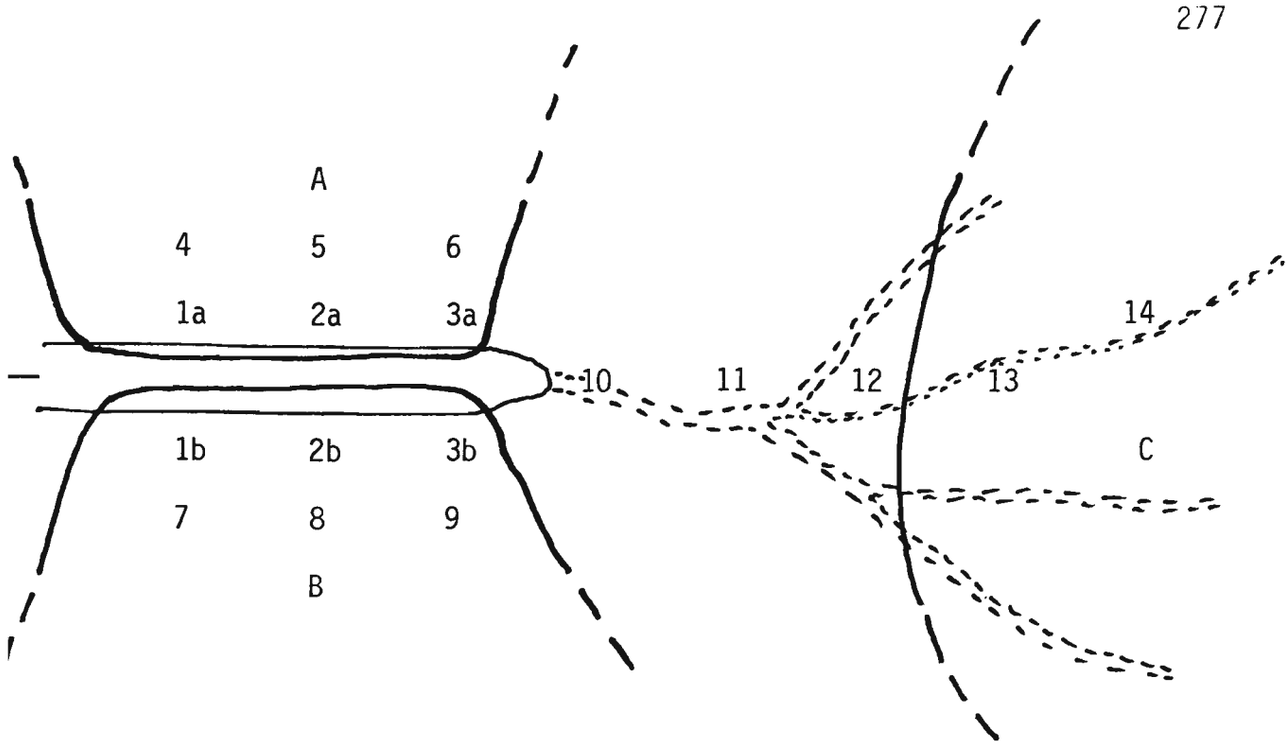

Figure 5. Agu ngalagun (complex).

In this figure, site 10 is agu ngalagun for both A and B. However, C may also be included, though less ambiguously. In this situation C may be described as a junior partner. With respect to site 11, we can conceive that A, B and C would be equal partners. With respect to site 12, we can envisage that C would be the senior partner, for the site lies closest to those sites which C designates agu kunyji. Sites designated 1a, 2a and 3a belong exclusively to A; similarly, sites 1b, 2b and 3b belong exclusively to B.

The suggestion that sites (specifically agu ngalagun) can be ranked as belonging more or less to different individuals or different congeries of individuals is not alien to Kugu-Nganychara thinking. Moreover, if sites classified as agu kunyji can be conceived of as an unambiguously-controlled core or heartland, then categorical distinctions may be made within the heartland itself (see Chapter 11 for a detailed discussion of this point).

Thus far I have avoided introducing terms such as 'ownership', or 'custodianship', 'owning group' or 'estate' into this discussion. Instead, I have talked about an individual or a congeries of individuals with rights to particular sites. These rights are transmitted from father to child. In other words, both men and women succeed to their father's rights; however, it is the normal expectation that only men will be able to transmit their rights to their children.

There are two major problems which must be dealt with before we can proceed. The first problem consists of specifying the congeries of individuals who hold rights to the same set of agu kunyji. The second problem consists of specifying the nature of these rights.

Kinship systems versus descent systems:

Scheffler (1973) reviews the conceptual distinction which must be maintained between kinship systems and descent systems. He writes (1973: 756):

> If a society is to order social relations among its members by reference to presumed relations of genealogical connection, it may do so in either or both of two ways...
>
> The first of these ways is egocentrically, by focusing on each person individually and subdividing the totality of persons considered to be genealogically connected to him (his kindred) into a number of lesser categories - categories of kin. If each of these categories is ascribed a more or less distinctive set of rights and duties with respect to Ego, and vice versa, each person is then the center or hub of a system of social relations...
>
> The other way...is in terms of common descent. By focusing on a few (usually deceased) individuals, all persons recognized as descendants or as some specified type of descendant of each of these selected individuals may be deemed to constitute a single set. Again, distinctive statuses may be ascribed to members of these sets vis-a-vis one another, or with respect to nonmembers in general or special types of nonmembers...

Scheffler describes the egocentric systems as kinship systems, and the ancestor-oriented systems as "descent systems". He adds (1973: 756-7):

> It should be kept in mind that these systems are defined and are most clearly distinguishable by the foci of their respective subcategories: the subcategories of a kinship system are egocentric; those of a descent system are ancestor-oriented.

Both systems may be found within a single society. Scheffler (1973: 758) argues that "To all appearances, all societies have kinship systems..., and a great many have descent systems as well." With respect to the Kugu-Nganychara, it is not difficult to demonstrate the existence of a kinship system. More problematic is establishing whether or not there is a descent system.

For the Berndts (Berndt, R.M. and C.H. 1964: 42), the "land-holding group", as they call it, is the "local descent group". They write:

> The *local descent group* has a specific connotation in the literature on the Australian Aborigines... It points to a group of people bound to the same locality by ties of more than transient kind - ties of descent and kinship, as well as of religion. In other words, its members are united by common patrilineal descent, share a given site or constellation of sites...and can trace their relationship genealogically.

The Berndts stress that the local descent group - "We could speak of this as a patrilineal descent group" - should be distinguished from the clan. Of the latter they write:

> A *clan* is a group of people who claim to be descended in one line from the same putative ancestor or ancestress, not always named and not necessarily in human shape. They may not be able to trace their relationship to one another in genealogical terms, and may not live in the same area... The clan is virtually always exogamous. Most Aboriginal clans are patrilineal...

The major distinction is that the local descent group implies demonstrable genealogical links; the clan does not.

In Scheffler's terms, the clan, as described by the Berndts, appears to relate to descent systems, in that membership of the clan is defined with respect to a putative ancestor or ancestress; however, the "local descent group" does not. Nevertheless, the fact that genealogical ties (presumably agnatic ties) can be demonstrated between all members of the "land-holding group" logically entails a single apical ancestor. Consequently, it may be legitimate for the Berndts to talk of descent groups, even in Scheffler's terms. However, their presentation contains two difficulties. Firstly, it is not indicated whether membership of the group is determined by reference to a common apical ancestor, or whether its composition arises simply out of successive patrifilial ties which entail rights in the same tract of land. Secondly, they do not explain how knowledge of real genealogical ties is maintained over time, given the fact that genealogical depth among Australian Aboriginal groups is generally reported to be very shallow.

At the same time it is legitimate to say that rights in land are held corporately and equally - in a formal, but not in an actual sense, as we shall observe - by a number of individuals. Moreover, rights in land begin at birth, if not earlier (see discussion of conception in Chapter 10), by virtue of being the child of a particular man. In Scheffler's terms, the evidence suggests that there is indeed a descent system. He writes (1973: 764):

> Ethnographers have often spoken of individuals as "inheriting" certain jural statuses that are in fact associated with membership of descent groups, but a clear distinction must be drawn between the intergenerational transmission of

> rights...held successively by single individuals and those held simultaneously by sets of individuals. The latter, if allocated "on the basis of birth or genealogical position" (Barth 1966: 24), are held and transmitted by common descent. Therefore, we shall speak of rules of inheritance only when the rights in question are held by single individuals; that is, when the rights are noncorporate...
>
> From this perspective it is clear that rules of inheritance must be regarded as components of a society's kinship system... We may restrict the terms 'patrilineal' and 'matrilineal' to forms of genealogical connection recognized within the descent systems of societies...and describe rules of inheritance (or succession) as agnatic or uterine, using these terms to describe forms of genealogical connection recognized within the kinship systems of societies.

The question of how these land-holding groups may be defined as descent groups must be left to one side for the moment. Certainly they are not labelled in any way unless we accept the tautological proposition that the circumlocutions used to describe individuals with rights in a particular site or set of sites - e.g., 'the people who inhabit X' - in fact label local descent groups. There are certainly no other expressions which serve this function. (In the next chapter, in which I return to the question of descent groups, I discuss the unsatisfactory character of so-called 'totemic' labels.)

For the moment, I wish to turn attention to the composition of these land-owning or land-holding groups. The following facts emerge:

1) In the vast majority of cases, all individuals with primary rights in the same sites are genealogically linked at <u>no more</u> than two generations degree of removal. In short, all individuals share a common FF. In another, rather unusual case, 23 individuals

have rights in the same land; 18 are descended from a single man (either F or FF to all individuals); 4 others (including one adopted male) trace descent from another man (either F or FF to all individuals); and 1 woman has rights from her father. None of these apical males can be linked genealogically with either of the others. (We shall observe later that there is no specification of exogamy preventing marriages between individuals holding corporate rights in a single tract of land; nor, for that matter - again predicting later discussion - is it useful to speak of clan exogamy.)

What we do observe among the Kugu-Nganychara is a situation in which descent group loyalties (conceding, for the moment, that the land-owning corporation is indeed a patrilineal descent group) conflict strongly with familial loyalties. There can be little question that familial interests almost invariably take precedence over other interests. Men are most concerned to guarantee and to sponsor the interests of their own family of procreation; and their wives stand strongly beside them in these matters. Men, particularly those who have achieved high status through the various mechanisms available to them, direct much of their energies to the task of ensuring the maintenance of their status through their eldest son. The latter is seen as replacing or taking over from his father on his death. In terms of the kinship system, the oldest male sibling has jural authority over his younger siblings; and in the common situation where a number of brothers in the senior generation hold rights to the same tract of land, it is the senior brother (structurally senior in the case of classificatory brothers, not necessarily the oldest) who is normally entitled to the status of "boss man" over the corporate land. This situation will maintain itself in the event of his death when his eldest son will take over,

provided that he is sufficiently mature (i.e., pama manu thayan - mature adult male) and able to rally sufficient political support (from his close kindred) to assert his right to follow in his father's footsteps. (In the case of forceful individuals, they may successfully forego the support of their close kindred, though in the normal expectation it is precisely forceful individuals who will most likely attract support.) His father's siblings will most likely be by-passed.

Given this situation, it is clear that junior siblings and, in turn, their children, are placed at a political disadvantage. They have three alternatives open to them: firstly, they can acquiesce with the situation thereby assigning their sons as well as themselves to a probably permanent condition of political marginality; secondly, they can attempt to carve out a niche for themselves within the territory to which they have rights, either by attempting to gain exclusive control over certain residential sites not occupied regularly by their senior brother (real or classificatory) or by vying for political power with the person who is, or who is structurally, destined to become "boss man"; finally, they can choose to look for a totally new sphere of political influence. (I return to these issues in Chapter 11.)

Apart from primary ties transmitted from one's F, an individual has secondary rights to land through a number of lineal kin: M (and MF), FM, and MM. These secondary ties are all potentially convertible to primary rights in circumstances where members of the land-holding corporation die out. This situation can of course be generally predicted some time in advance. In these circumstances, another set of rights become important. These are rights of access.

As one informant put it, "No one can block you from mother's country, or wife's country." Given that this situation applies to each individual, and that each child is born into a situation where what is accessible to his parents is also, as a matter of course, accessible to him, any individual has rights of access to his father's (and thus his father's father's country), his father's mother's country, his mother's (and, thus, his mother's father's country), and his mother's mother's country. Each right of access is potentially convertible into a right of tenure. For example, if a woman is the last surviving member of a particular land-holding corporation, her husband may occupy the land with her, on her behalf, and stake out a strong claim for their children. Occupation (and use) are here, as elsewhere, "nine-tenths of the law". The children, if and when they gain tenure, will hold the land through their mother. The Kugu-Nganychara easily specify land acquired through any of these genealogical links. Note the following expressions (Kugu-Mu'inh):

(i) agu ngathu ngathi-nam
place 1 sing. OBL. F - ABL.
"My country from father".

(ii) agu ngathu thawa-akinh ngothope-nam
place 1 sing. OBL. woman - old FM - ABL.
"My country from old lady, mother from my father" (i.e., FM).

(iii) agu ngathidhe-nam ngathu
place M -ABL 1 sing. OBL.
"Country from my mother".

(iv) agu ngathame-ang ngathu wanta, agu ngathame wanta
place MM -ERG. 1 sing. OLB. leave place MM leave
"Country from my grannie" (i.e., MM).

"Mother's country" is also commonly referred to as 'MF's country', agu ngathunga ngathurum, or agu ngathunga ngathurumm (Uw. ngathunga - MF), 'My country from my MF'.

At this point I wish to specify the precise character of the "estate". I propose to adopt Stanner's term, not only for convenience, but also in the hope of furthering his pioneering work. When I use the term estate, I wish it to be understood in the most inclusive sense, i.e., as equivalent to agu pibinam, "country from father", incorporating both agu kunyji and agu ngalagun. For agu kunyji, considered as a set of sites belonging to the land-owning group (henceforth referred to as the land corporation), I reserve the terms heartland or "full country" (borrowing the English gloss employed by the Kugu-Nganychara). I shall use the term core site to refer to a single site within the heartland. For the Kugu-Nganychara term, agu ngalagun, I shall use the term company land to describe a number of sites thus classified, and company place to describe a specific instance.

Among the Kugu-Nganychara the estate exhibits the following features:

1) It consists of one or more named sites, most frequently consisting of both core sites and company places.
2) Primary rights (i.e., rights of tenure) in the estate are

held either by an individual or by a corporation consisting of two or more individuals. Each of these individuals has acquired rights of tenure in the estate at birth by virtue of the fact that his (or her) father holds or held rights of tenure in the same estate.

3) Rights of tenure in core sites (i.e., the heartland) are held exclusively by members of the land corporation. Among the Kugu-Nganychara, people standing in this relationship to particular sites are referred to as "boss" of the sites (pama agu kunyji).

4) Rights of tenure in company places are shared with members of at least one other corporation. All individuals who share rights in such sites are described individually as "boss" of these sites (pama agu ngalagun). Collectively they may be referred to as a "company" (agu pama agu thaha-thonon, or agu nganychara thaha-thonon).

5) Commonly, one senior member of the corporation (usually the eldest son of the previous senior male) is singled out as the principal "boss" of the estate. Seniority in this context is structural seniority. That is, the man designated "boss" will be referred to by all other male members of the corporation within his generation as B+. Correspondingly, his father will stand as B+ to all males in the previous generation; and so on. A common way of indicating structural seniority versus structural juniority is to refer to a pair of linked ascendants (e.g., siblings, real or classificatory, two generations above Ego). For example, a man might say:

> I call that man "father" (pibi, ngathi - F, FB-). He calls me nhengk (S, B+S), ngathengke. We come from two grandfathers (pama thepa ngathake kucham - FF - two). My FF comes in front (manu thayan - older, senior; mature); my "FF" from his F comes behind (kuyam - junior) (i.e., he is, in fact, or is structurally equivalent to, Ego's FFB-).

I sometimes use the term focal male to refer to the man described among the Kugu-Nganychara as "biggest boss".

6) Rights of tenure also invest members of the corporation with powers to exclude all but the following categories of people:

(i) Close cognates of all members of the estate corporation and of spouses of the members;

(ii) People whose estates lie along the same river as that of the corporation, regardless of the closeness or distance of actual kin ties with members of the corporation, or with spouses of the members.

As one informant put it, referring to members of an estate which lies upstream from his own: "Those people come from one river. No matter not close-to relation; I got to make welcome".

These rules will fail to apply in many actual situations involving conflict or tension (e.g., after deaths, or fights). In these circumstances, people will tend to retreat to their own estate, or locate themselves with kin who are bound to support them. Moreover, visitors are always subject to certain expected behaviours. For example, they must not "sneak" onto the estate, but must approach campsites in the approved formal manner. Improper behaviour will always be interpreted as inimical. Sorcery will almost inevitably

be suspected. Members of the corporation can be expected to view improper entry as trespassing, the behaviour of "outsiders". The latter have no rights and may be driven off or killed.

It seems that the easiest way to define "outsiders" or "outside people" is to see them as people from different riverine systems who are not considered genealogically connected with any member of the corporation, or with any spouse of any member. Of course, this definition is ultimately dependent on interactional patterns and the establishment of genealogical connexions through marriages.

The riverine systems as such cannot be considered endogamous. Nor is endogamy at this level ever put forward as desirable. Thus, the population of each riverine system is genealogically connected, at a more or less high level, with a wider population in which it is located as a highly interactive sub-population. It would be expected, furthermore, that each riverine system would come into regular contact with its immediate neighbours; and increasingly less contact as one moves either north or south. By and large, this describes the actual situation fairly accurately. However, the "Christmas Creek" system is more closely linked with the "Thuuk River" system and even further north than it is with any system south of Breakfast Creek. Its population orients itself almost exclusively northwards. At the northern end of the Kugu-Nganychara region, the situation is less clear cut. The Kendall River system seems relatively self-enclosed (though this must be balanced against the fact that the Kendall splits fairly neatly into a number of sub-zones: lower Kendall - north bank; lower Kendall - south bank; and upper Kendall). There are some links

to the "Thuuk River" system, but few to the "Holroyd". Knox Creek seems to mark a fairly strong northerly limit. Thus it seems legitimate to talk of two gross (largely endogamous) systems within the Kugu-Nganychara region: the Kendall River system, and the "Christmas Creek" - "Holroyd" system. For these purposes, "Thuuk River" may be included within the "Holroyd".

7) Members of the corporation are expected to care for the estate. Caring consists of tending the countryside, keeping wells clear, filling them in after use (especially along the coast where there is an injunction against leaving wells "open"), carrying out the annual burning of the grass, and cleaning the awu (see below). It also involves proper moral behaviour: food should not be wasted; sexual irregularities should not be indulged; men should not take water from the wells after killing animals or fish (someone must first pour water on their hands from a baler shell); and game should be cleaned or butchered in the approved manner. Some of these regulations are localized rather than general. On the Kendall River, spears should be lain down at right angles to the river; if not, fish will prove hard to obtain.

The penalties for failing to observe any of these injunctions is similar. Game and vegetable foods will become scarce. When we visited a site famous for its flying fox colony ("agu mu'am, flying fox camp here from start"), the flying foxes were found to have disappeared. Their disappearance was blamed on sexual irregularities among members of the estate, viz., a case of B-Z incest. The serpent who controls the flying foxes was presumed to have become angry and left.

The consequences of neglect can be serious, even to the point of endangering the lives of the corporation's members. Conversely, the deaths of members may be reflected in the estate, commonly by the death of trees (particularly trees given special significance). The well-being of the estate is reflected in the well-being of its members, and vice versa.

8) Members of the estate believe that they can call on the spirits of deceased members in a general manner (i.e., they do not call on particular deceased ancestors) to help them when they are hunting. (They also abuse the spirits when they apparently refuse to lend assistance.) These spirits are said to lead an existence parallel to those in the non-spirit world. They occasionally appear to older men, offering them food and occasionally making them gifts of spears and woomeras. In such cases the spirits may be those of particular deceased ancestors.

Present generations are said to tend the estate for future generations; however, it also appears that they have a responsibility to past generations (and vice versa). The consequences of improper or careless behaviour among the living may be largely the result of actions taken by the dead.

9) The role of the principal "boss", or focal male, is particularly interesting in this respect. He is frequently seen as the most direct mediator between the living and the dead (see also discussion under awu).

10) The focal male has important functions in day-to-day camp life. Within the general campsite, it is he who allocates particular "shades" or camping places both to other members of the estate, and to visitors. To him also falls the responsibility of resolving disputes. He may also regulate economic activities conducted at, or from, the campsite.

11) Within many estates there is a site considered of paramount importance. This site is referred to as agu nhampa a'e (nhampa - name, a'e - big, important). (Uw. agu nhampa yoko). Frequently it gives its name to the entire estate, and to members of the estate corporation. For example, pu'an is agu nhampa a'e for an estate in the "Thuuk River" zone. The people who own it are called pama agu pu'an wakanh, 'the people who "walk about" pu'an'. On the "Holroyd River", thaha-kungadha, its ceremonial ground, wanam-awu, and associated camping place, aye, are at the core of an estate the owners of which (now all dead) were referred to as (pama agu)thaha-kungadha wakanh, 'people who frequent thaha-kungadha'. A site just south along the coast called thampenych gives its name to another group; the same applies to kamping, yangku and to waalang.

I shall refer to sites designated agu nhampa a'e as focal sites. There is generally only one focal site in each estate. Other sites are described as agu nhampa woynyo (woynyo - small, little, unimportant). I shall refer to them as non-focal sites.

12) Agu ngaynych (ngaynych - "poison", restricted): There are a number of sites, or particular areas within named sites which are covered with particular restrictions. These sites or areas are regarded as being imbued with dangerous powers and significance. By ignoring these restrictions a person is liable to break out in sores, or he may provoke unfortunate consequences for everyone (e.g., bad weather). If the offence is particularly serious, the person may leave himself (or herself) open to sorcery, or even direct retaliatory action. There are a number of categories of restricted sites or areas:

a) agu panych - "forbidden place": Within many estates there are particular sites or sets of sites described as agu panych, "forbidden place" or "poison country". Often quite large tracts of land are classified in this way. Access to these sites and exploitation of the resources found there are restricted to mature men (pama manu thayan) of the estate in which these sites are located. Women, young men and children, even though they belong to the estate, are denied entry. "Young fellows can't walk about that place... By and by they get sore foot or sore all over..." Mature, adult men from other estates may be allowed access, but normally they must be accompanied by a member of the relevant estate. Sites described as agu panych may be conceived of as a private hunting estate for the senior men. In all cases of which I am aware, these sites fall within the core or heartland of estates. That is, I am unaware of any case in which a site classified as agu panych is also a company place, agu ngalagun.

(b) agu munka: Sites designated agu munka constitute a special sub-set of restricted sites. That is, they are also classified as agu panych. These sites are all perceived as having been "left" (wanta) by the munka story. Frequently these sites are celebrated for their yams (which, of course, may only be harvested by senior men).

c) ceremonial grounds: Ceremonial grounds, notably wanam-awu at thaha-kungadha (H) kunalam-awu at yangku (X), and munka-awu at thugu or muthawul (X), are for obvious reasons, associated with important campsites. However, particular areas within the general campsite may be restricted to the following categories of people: initiated men; men who have not previously participated in the ceremony; women and children. At wanam-awu, certain areas are set aside during the ceremony for initiated men, and for young men passing through the ceremony for the first time. These restrictions apply only while the ceremony is in progress. However, even when the ceremony is not being held, certain focal spots (associated with particular ceremonial activities and objects) continue to be subject to restrictions. (It is unknown whether the same applies in the case of kunalam and munka.)

d) Certain awu (other than the ceremonial grounds already specified (see later, 15);

e) Certain wells: In the case of wells, restrictions may relate to activities at the wells, rather than to access as such. However, although I have not encountered restrictions on access to wells which fall within unrestricted sites (and outside particular ritual contexts), I have encountered a case in the Cape Keerweer region where "young men" or "new men" (including myself) were prohibited from approaching

the well, although it was the communal source of water and very close to our camping place. Consequently I cannot ignore the possibility that the same situation does not occur occasionally (in both a spatial and a temporal sense) among the Kugu-Nganychara.

Wells everywhere have to be treated with some care. It is unlikely that a new well can be dug without the permission of a member of the estate corporation. Coastal wells generally must be filled after use, otherwise strong winds will spring up. Blood or grease from animals must not be allowed to contaminate the wells (for fear of lightning, cyclones, and the disappearance of game). Pregnant women must not use wells for fear that a small invisible snake (yuku thepanda) will enter the womb and induce a miscarriage. Nowadays soap must be kept away from wells (and other specified water sources) for fear of creating unseasonal rain. (See also the discussion of awu.)

13) The introduction of "new men", pama puugam (puugam - new):

There are special procedures governing the introduction of "new men" to a site, i.e., people who have never before visited the site. This is particularly true in the case of agu ngaynych or "poison places". As informants say, "New man, pama puugam, can't come in any way", i.e., unannounced. He (or she) has to be "baptised". In the case of agu panych, the person who "baptises" the "new man" must be a mature man, and, like the person to be introduced, a member of the estate corporation. The same applies to agu munka, though in this case the "new man" need not belong to the estate. However, the man performing the "baptism" must

still belong to the estate. In the case of less important sites, neither the person performing the "baptism" nor the person being "baptised" need belong to the estate in question, the former himself should not be "new" to the site, and preferably he should be of senior status. Ideally he would in fact belong to the estate.

The latter condition cannot always apply. For example, with the death of all estate members there would be no one to introduce "new men" to the country (although its status as agu panych or agu ngaynych remains unaffected whether there are members of the estate living or not). Moreover, it is important to note that a number of sites subject to restrictions lie in company land rather than in heartlands.

People who are "new men" in strange country are placed at a tremendous disadvantage. Even men of high status are fearful to move until they have been properly introduced to the country, noting the location of "story places" (awu) and discovering the directions in which it is safe to go hunting.

The introduction is affected in the following manner: the "baptiser" rubs "underarm smell" (awula), sweat from the armpit or axilla, over his own body - drawing his hands over his chest and stomach - and then rubbing the body of the person being "baptised": chest, stomach, arms, legs and the top of the head. He also blows in the hair of the "new man". Sometimes, not always, he will call out to the spirits (ngangka thanhtha) of the deceased, i.e., the "old people", people who used to belong to the estate, or who shared

in the company land.[1] He calls upon the spirits to recognize the "new man" on future occasions. The "smell" lessens the danger to the "new man" concealing his own body odour with an odour already familiar to the spirits. The latter are often portrayed in dances (notably the "devil" dance, ngangka thanhtha, from wanam) as sniffing the air, frightened of encountering possible strangers.

In 1970 I travelled south with a small band of people from Aurukun. On reaching thaha-pul.n, a major crossing on the Kendall River, the leader of the party was careful to give "underarm smell" to all the children. Instead of cupping water in his hands for drinking, he waded out into the river and drank directly from the flowing stream, keeping his hands behind his back, well clear of the water. Meanwhile his wife, acting on her own initiative, tore strips of bark from a tea-tree and made impromptu containers for gathering water. In this way she and the children were able to drink without coming into direct contact with the river. After these preliminaries, the man carefully rubbed water on his body. Then he lined the children up on the bank and began to "baptise" them. Taking water from the river, he ran his hands briefly over his stomach and under his arms, and then rubbed his hands over the stomach and legs of his youngest son, disregarding the fact that the child was fully clothed. At the same time, he called out, invoking the ngangka thanhthe. As the boy was a little frightened

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1. While it is men who are generally involved in giving "underarm smell", I was present on one occasion when a woman from north of the Archer River gave "underarm smell" to her husband, a Wik-Ngathana speaker from the Kirke River area, when they visited a "story place" in her estate. The object was to remove a sharp pain which he felt in his side. The "story place" was "left" by a whistling eagle. The pain was attributed to the bird which, according to the couple, must be poking the husband with his beak.

and attempted to escape confinement, his mother called out, quite simply, aaka awu (WM), "story place". This was enough to settle him down immediately. The other children were all dealt with similarly. The man explained that if he did not "baptise" them, the children would become ill. The "story place" in question was minha aychamba-awu, "emu story place". It is regarded as particularly "touchy". Members of this estate have long died out. The estate of the leader of the travelling party lies 70 km. to the south.

14) agu mukam: Any section of the landscape not classified as agu ngaanych is classified as agu mukam. Mukam is a general concept meaning free or unrestricted. More precisely, sites classified as mukam are subject only to the general restrictions governing entry into an estate.

15) Agu awu: Kugu-Nganychara informants have never put forward the argument that the estate should or must contain sites classified as agu awu, "story places" (cf. WM. aak awa; equivalent to McConnel's auwa). The categories, agu kunyji, agu pibinam, and agu ngalagun, may be defined independently of the notion of awu; conversely, particular awu may fall into one or other of these categories. Simply put, the estate may or may not contain agu awu. Where awu do occur within estates, members of the estate corporation generally hold particular rights over them. Awu need not be estate-specific. They may fall within "company land." In these circumstances they are said to be "company awu" (awu nganana, or awu nganana thaha-thonon). In terms of custodianship informants state that "both families look after."

I have already noted that ceremonial centres may be referred to as awu (e.g., wanam-awu). These centres constitute a small subset of all awu which occur within the Kugu-Nganychara region. Most awu have no ceremonial connotations. In most cases they are associated with a natural species, e.g., mosquito, crocodile, catfish, barramundi, yam, waterlily, etc.. In fewer cases they are associated with particular phenomena, e.g., moon, sun, shooting star, with cultural items, e.g., yam stick, and dilly bags, and with diseases, e.g., "cold sick" and diarrhoea. (Awu recorded for the Kugu-Nganychara region are listed in Appendices C and D.)

(a) Creation of awu: A number of awu are said to have been created by various historical characters whose exploits are recorded in Kugu-Nganychara oral literature.[1] The principal accounts ("stories", agu kath) relate to the following historical figures: the kaha-(k)ungken brothers who created the wanam ceremony; the mongkom men, who introduced dog names, personal names, "totems" (kam waya), fishing nets, and thayje-mongkom (thaajum), a song style; the turtle men who introduced the turtle ceremony, kunalam; the old lady who created ma'a-akam (mourning ritual); and the various figures who created the munka ceremony. These accounts relate essentially to the coastal division of the "Holroyd" - "Christmas Creek" area. On the Kendall River, the principal account relates to pucha (a ceremony based on the Kendall River, and closely related to apalacha, a major coastal ceremony further to the north.) On "Breakfast Creek" (Edward River) and Moonkan Creek the major account relates to the fight between the freshwater and saltwater crocodiles (already

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1. The same applies to many place names other than awu, e.g., beach sites located between thaha-kungadha and the "King River" ("Thuuk River") are said to be "all wanam names, from two kaha-(k)ungken men who left names" (JNg/Uwanh).

referred to), and the creation of the pilam ceremony at ithang (ER). Inland the "stories" involve less dramatic and impactful happenings. None involves the creation of a ceremony. (I provide a resume of some of the more important "stories" in Chapter 10. Details of awu created or "left" are recorded in the relevant account.)

In the vast majority of cases there is no explanatory account. Informants state that these awu have been there "from start". Sometimes they hypothesize that there may have been some creative event to account for particular awu, but that no one has any knowledge of it. It should not be thought that this ignorance represents a recent or post-contact situation. Either the awu never had a creative account linked with it; or it has been lost as part of the normal processes of historical forgetfulness or shifting priorities.

(b) 'Increase sites': The Australian literature makes frequent reference to 'increase rituals' (see, for example, Berndt and Berndt 1964: 227-31). Without entering into a debate on the accuracy or not of this term, it is useful to refer to sites where such activities are enacted as 'increase sites'. A number of awu (though not all) fall into this category. In this connexion it is useful to note that in the Kugu-Nganychara region 'increase rituals' are hardly ever associated with awu for which a creative account exists. Me'a-awu, the mosquito story place "left" by the mongkom men, is the only case of which I am aware. Increase sites are classified as either good, safe, beneficial (agu awu wanhthi) or bad, dangerous, harmful, inimical (agu awu waya). The activities performed there are mostly commonly described as 'frightening the awu'.

(i) agu awu wanhthi: Most 'increase sites' are considered

beneficial. Informants state that such awu may only be activated by "boss men", i.e., mature adult men belonging to the estate in which the awu is located. However, a further condition also applies. In the case of awu which represent foods normally obtained by women, i.e., certain foods classified as mayi (vegetable foods) and nga'a (fish, crustacea, shellfish), the awu are activated by women; and, in the case of awu which represent foods normally obtained by men, i.e., other foods in the categories of minha (terrestrial mammals, reptiles, birds) and nga'a, the awu are activated by men.

Examples of awu activated by men are nga'a-awu, salmon and saltwater catfish (X), and nga'a wunggam-awu, barramundi (KS). An example of an awu activated by women is mayi payan-awu, waterlily (H).

Nga'a-awu is located on the north bank of "Christmas Creek", near waalang. The appropriate time for activating the awu is thutpam umu kabam, i.e., at the end of the stormy season, towards the beginning of the wet season. The "Boss-man" (the senior male of the estate in which the awu is located) clears the awu of sticks, leaves and grass and calls out to the "old people", i.e., to the spirits (ngangka thanhtha) of deceased members of the estate corporation. Appeals are directed first at close relations, viz., FF, F, and FB. Later they are broadened to take in more distant agnates (e.g., FFB-, etc.).

Informants explicitly deny that the fish are 'made' or 'increased'. The explanation given is that the fish are hiding away at the bottom of the river. 'Frightening the awu' quite simply means that an appeal is made to the spirits to frighten (kenhthan) or flush fish from the bottom of the river, making them accessible to hunters.

The activities performed at the awu do not improve the supply of fish merely in the vicinity of the awu. They are stated to be sent out to all the rivers.[1] The "Boss-man" calls the names of all places where the fish are normally supposed to occur. There is a strong sense that the operation is performed for the benefit of everyone, not just for people owning or controlling the awu. Indeed, "outside people" (i.e., people who do not belong to the relevant estate corporation) can request one of the "Boss-men" to perform the operation.

A "Boss-man" may beg off the task, claiming that he is too skinny (pama kempa waya). Were he to "frighten" the awu it is believed that the fish "sent out" would also be kempa waya, i.e., in "poor condition". It is important then to seek the cooperation of a "big solid man" (pama mu'ama), for then the fish will be "big and fat" (yi'i minim). The "boss" of the site may delegate the task to a suitable individual from another estate.

After these activities have been carried out people must avoid the awu for a few days, until leaves, dust and twigs have fallen or blown into the awu. In addition the "Boss-man" - the man who has performed the appropriate activities - must refrain from eating fish of the species represented at the awu for several months, otherwise the fish will disappear altogether. In the case of nga'a-awu, this restriction is lifted in oynych.n ngaka thangku, i.e., after the end of the wet season. The restriction does not apply to any other individuals.

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1. It should probably be indicated that there is some variability in opinion on this point. Some informants state that the fish are sent to all the rivers (but not normally outside the Kugu-Nganychara region). Others stress the local character of the activity. When pushed on the issue they will agree that fish can also be sent to specified localities on other rivers.

(ii) Agu awu waya, "no good story place": Examples of harmful awu are me'a-awu, mosquito (H), kaha-ngungku, "cold sick", influenza (X), pand-awu, "sweetheart" (H), kuna waya or kunanga, "runny tummy", diarrhoea (H) and pupima-awu, "whistle wind", cold sou-westerly wind (H).

Unlike awu wanhthi, which should only be activated by "Boss-men", it is said that awu waya may be activated by anyone. The reason normally given for a person wishing to activate a harmful awu is to express dissatisfaction at his treatment by his fellows. The following account explains why a man might wish to activate me'a-awu, the "mosquito story place":

> If another man uses my spear and breaks it, I might 'make' me'a-awu by cutting the trees there with a tomahawk. In this way I frighten the awu. By and by there will be too many mosquitoes. Everywhere, lots of mosquitoes. After two, three days, something like that, I might feel sorry for people. Then I will go back to the awu. I'll take grass and bark and tie up the broken branches. Then the mosquitoes will stop coming.

"Frightening the awu" produces rather indiscriminate effects. No one is immune from the mosquito bites, not even the 'awu-maker'. The latter will be content if people can be induced to enquire: "Oh, too many mosquitoes. Who has made me'a-awu?" The 'awu-maker' may admit his actions, so that people will seek out his reasons. Having discovered his grievance they will give assurances that it will never happen again; and they may even make him presents. He is expected to overcome his sulkiness and to repair the awu. Only he can perform the task. Once completed, the mosquitoes should then occur only in normal numbers, and social harmony is restored.

In the case of pand-awu ('sweetheart'), the activator is likely to be an old person who has become sulky over lack of care and attention from young people. "Frightening the awu" makes young men enraptured of old women, and young girls enamoured of old men. Both men and women can activate this awu.

In the case of pupima-awu, "whistle wind", activities need not be localised to the same degree. There are in fact a number of places where this cold wind (pupima thaha-kuchira: pupima - S.W. wind, thaha - mouth, kuchira - cold) may be provoked: pupu, wembukam, kuladha, yangku, ku'a-l-wun.n, i.e., at a number of sites along the coast from near the mouth of "Christmas Creek" to north of the "Thuuk River". The activities can take a variety of forms. At kuladha, if one pulls up or burns the grass - waka ngaacha - growing at the small waterhole where the two mongkom men camped, it will cause the pupima wind to blow. At thampenych and elsewhere the procedure is described in this way: 'If a person wants to make wind, he cuts his wrist and soaks it in the water. Then he calls out: "Oh, let the S.W. wind come up. Make everyone feel cold..." By and by the wind will come up (pupima wunpa). If you are sulky you can get your own back.' Again, these procedures are only successful if used at the right time of the year, viz., July-August. It is also interesting to note that people from this region believe that people living to the north of them (as far as Aurukun) will blame them for creating this wind. The blame seems to be shifted progressively southward. On an actual occasion when the wind sprang up (23/7/1971), it coincided with extremely cold conditions in southern Queensland and drove our small band out of the bush into the settlement at Edward River. There it was the main topic of conversation. Some men blamed it on the women who had been fishing

at the Chapman River. Obviously, the men said, they had been cleaning out the wells for drinking water but were not filling them in. Other men attributed the blame further south, saying that there was a "story place" on Melaman Creek and that some of the men working on the cattle station at Baas Yard, located on the Melaman, must have had something to do with it.

Despite the general statement that awu waya may be activated by anyone, some of them are considered too dangerous or powerful to be activated other than by "Boss-men". For example, punga-awu, sun or hot weather, can only be activated, according to the focal male or "boss" of the estate in which it is located, by a member of his estate corporation, ideally himself. "Outsiders", he says, are too frightened to interfere with the awu, lest they destroy everyone by performing the operation incorrectly. The "Boss-man" should perform the tasks in the following order:

- firstly, he cleans out the awu (a small circular depression), removing grass, branches, leaves and loose soil;
- secondly, a fire is made off to one side of the awu;
- when the fire has died down, the hot ashes are shovelled into the awu with a baler shell. At the same time, the "Boss-man" calls out to the spirits, calling for hot weather, for extreme heat to scorch the feet of anyone walking north, south, anywhere, but especially on the saltpans and on the sandridges.

As in the case of me'a-awu the process is reversible. Water may be poured into the awu from a baler shell as the "Boss-man" calls out for the sand and the saltpans to become cooler. This cooling process may be performed whenever the weather is unusually hot. If a bushfire passes accidentally through the awu the "Boss-man" should come and initiate the cooling process, otherwise hot weather will automatically ensue.

(c) Clouds and awu: There is a general belief among the Kugu-Nganychara that if strangers or "new men" visit an awu a cloud will appear in the sky above the awu in the shape of the phenomenon which the awu represents. Rain will threaten even in the wrong season (e.g., kay.man). Senior men and women will often sit up all night singing and calling out to the spirits to keep the rain at bay.

Other improper activities at awu are also likely to produce rain. One informant gave the following account:

> If you do something in a story place, like if you spear a fish or a pig and rub your hands in the water it will "make up" for rain. If your hands have blood on them (ma'a kamu) or grease from the cooked animal (ma'a yi'ma'n) it will soon rain.

When camping in the bush injunctions are frequently made against washing in lagoons or water courses near an awu. Soap, especially, should be avoided because it makes the water foamy. To wash clothes nowadays in the bush people carry water in a container away from the major watersource. Near awu of special significance, or regarded as rather "touchy", people will often not scoop up water with their hands for drinking. (See earlier account of "baptism" of children at thaha-pul.n.) Such caution is exercised notably on newly arriving at a site. Behaviour soon relaxes. The country becomes less dangerous, less likely to be disturbed.

Clouds may also appear above an awu if the "Boss-man" becomes ill, or is close to death. If a boomerang-shaped cloud appears above thaha-kungadha it indicates that somebody is at the "story place", or that the "Boss-man" is ill. If the "Boss-man" from waalang is ill, a dilly bag (waychi) will appear in the sky from waychi-awu; or, alternatively, a salmon or a catfish from nga'a-awu. A dog-

shaped cloud appears in the sky if the "Boss-man" from the mouth of the "Thuuk River" becomes ill (from the munka story). Similarly a turtle appears if the "Boss" of yangku becomes ill (from the turtle story, kunalam/anychalam); and a diamond stingray (from agu pont) if a Kugu-kujin or "Shark" man (south of the "Holroyd River") becomes ill.

(16) Agu thanggun: When a person is speared or "caught" (i.e., killed by sorcery), his spirit (ngangka thanhthe) follows the person who speared or "caught" him back to the latter's estate. Having found the "Boss-man" - i.e., the person responsible for his death - the spirit makes himself visible and indicates the place where he plans to settle. He makes a well and finds himself a shade tree. Henceforth people other than the "Boss" of the spirit must stay away from this site, for they must not observe the spirit. Moreover, the spirit's campsite becomes dangerous in two ways. Firstly, if children or others trespassed onto the site or swam nearby in any swamp or river, the spirit would become angry and make rain as a warning to hunt them away. Secondly, interference with the shade tree used by the spirit is potentially dangerous to the "Boss-man". If the tree is chopped, either maliciously or inadvertently, the "Boss-man" is likely to become sick or even die. Such interference is regarded as ngaynych thayan, i.e., strictly forbidden (ngaynych - "poison", prohibited, subject to special restrictions, "law"; thayan - strong, severe). To avoid these dangers the place is classified as agu panych (see 12a, above), and people are forbidden from entering it.

After a period of time the "Boss-man" may show the site to his father or to his sons. Although the spirit is normally invisible to the living, it can be detected in other ways. For

example, at thumba-awu (H), a deceased member of the estate in which this site is located controlled a spirit who can sometimes be heard singing - sometimes thuunim, sometimes thaajum, sometimes piithal[1]...

Vagrant animals and even trees are sometimes taken as signs of agu thanggun. For example, a man from "inside", from the headwaters of the Kendall River, was killed at thupiji (H) in a spear fight. His spirit settled on the coast. The presence of the spirit was indicated by a Palm Cockatoo, Probosciger aterrimus (gila). This bird is found occasionally inland but never along the coast. On another occasion a Mapgie goose landed near me on the Kendall River and behaved in a very curious manner, swimming right up to me where I stood in the water, and following me out of the water onto the bank. Other members of the party ran up and said not to kill the bird, for it must be a "story bird". Large isolated cabbage palms found on the edges of coastal ridges are also said to indicate agu thanggun, representing the spirits of men from the interior where the palms are more common.

(17) Agu koyanyje - birth-place: Of the Kugu-Nganychara who were born in the bush, some were born in their father's country, in line with the quotation which begins this chapter. Most often, however, people were born in their mother's country. It appears that women preferred to spend the final period of confinement in their own country, receiving the support of their own family. An alternative (but not opposed) argument might be that newly-married men tended to reside in their wife's country. More generally, younger married men - at least during the period when their children were being born - may have resided with their wife's parents. (There is little need

1. Song styles; see Chapter 10.

to consider the question of co-wives for monogamy was the norm in this region. Even when men had two wives - and no cases occur in the genealogies where a man has more than two wives at any one time - the wives were almost invariably sisters and/or came from the same estate.) At least two possible reasons may be given for the pattern of uxorilocal residence in the past. The first is the desire of the parents-in-law to maintain their daughter with them, and at the same time to benefit from the hunting activities of their son-in-law who is obliged to distribute food to them. This may be seen as a form of bride service. The second is the rivalry between fathers and sons. A son may resent the political ascendancy of his father (or other senior agnates) within his own estate, and he may choose to live elsewhere until he gains a measure of status independent of estate corporation membership. Then he may return to his own estate with a degree of political power. This second explanation is harder to support than the first; however, father-son rivalry (especially father-eldest son) is intense among the Kugu-Nganychara, especially when the son is in early adulthood. As he grows older the rivalry diminishes. Fathers always promote strongly the interests of their sons (especially of their first-born). In turn, as the sons grow older they almost invariably become strong supporters of their fathers. Older men talk about their fathers in sentimental and eulogistic terms. After their father has died, men continually refer to their father in order to legitimize claims, to justify their versions of various song, dances and stories, and even to argue the rightness or wrongness of linguistic usages. The father has become the receptacle of all wisdom and knowledge, and the model to be emulated without deviation. This is a far cry from the painful scenes which may be witnessed in real life between men and their young adult sons, and complaints made by older men that their sons are running wild.

The birth-place is obviously regarded as having major significance. Throughout the Wik region trees are said to spring from the afterbirth which is buried in the ground at the place of delivery, and become shade trees which are specially identified with the person from whose afterbirth they have sprung. People will say: "That is my shade tree (wiba ngathu) from my birth-place." Nonda trees (Parinari nonda) are often singled out as having originated in this way.

Moreover, not only do people recall easily their own birth-place, but even casually, as they travel about, they will point out where various people, often distantly related, were born. Locutions such as "the birth-place of _____.", or "that place where _____ was born", often replace the usual place names.

Nevertheless, despite the obvious close relationship which exists between an individual and his or her birthplace there is little sense in which the individual is said to own or control the site. Among the Umpila on the east coast of the Peninsula individuals are attributed actual "ownership" of their birth-place during their own lifetime. In the event of the disappearance of the estate corporation this right may even extend from simply the birth-place to take in the whole estate, which may be transmitted to one's own children. In the one case I am aware of for the Wik-speaking area - well to the north of the Kugu-Nganychara region - one individual who claims a whole estate, apparently because his birthplace is located within it (at wath-nhiin), is treated with ill-disguised contempt. However, the fact that the claim is made - and, indeed, receives acknowledgement from an, admittedly, handful of individuals - suggests that being born at a particular location

may, in circumstances where ownership of a particular estate is in dispute, serve to support a claim. At least it provides a further dimension in the continuing dynamic of land-holding and land-claiming. Given the fact that almost all births occur in either mother's or father's estate, an individual is either strengthened in possible claims to mother's country (which, as we have noted earlier, are secondary only to claims to father's country), or reinforced in his primary claims to his own estate transmitted from his father.

A question to which I have not yet devoted any attention concerns the relationships which exist between sites. The chapter has tended to focus on particular sites or localities, and the range of ways in which they may be classified. Estates have been presented simply as a collection of sites. There is little sense in which a set of sites has been presented as a domain, to borrow Stanner's term - "an ecological life-space" (1965: 2). During the period in which I conducted research it was impossible to observe any group of people living entirely off the land. In any case, the development of a methodology to handle this notion would appear to pose immense difficulties especially in situations where domains are not group-specific[1]. Among the Kugu-Nganychara domains are clearly not exclusive. I shall return to this issue in Chapter 11. There we shall examine some concrete situations. Without resolving the methodological difficulties inherent in isolating and analysing domains, these concrete situations should bring them clearly into the open.

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1. It should be noted that Stanner himself refers to *"partially interpenetrative domains"* (1965: 12).

As a prelude to this later discussion I wish here to raise one issue, viz., the question of tracks or roads. While mapping it was impossible to consider the question of tracks or roads in detail. The routes taken when mapping on foot were plotted whenever possible (very difficult to establish on the coastal ridges); and the routes taken in the vehicle were noted in a general way. It became clear that there are two main north-south roads, one running along the beach, and the other on the eastern or western margin of the ridge marking the eastern boundary of the coastal plain. In an east-west direction the situation is much more complex. It is clear, particularly from data gathered for the coastline just south of the Kendall River, that features on the coastline, particularly large, isolated trees signpost tracks running inland to wells, and, further inland, to other named localities. These tracks tend to be what I shall call estate-specific. That is, control of the coastal site implies control of the track running inland from it and of the sites located on it. In formal elicitation sessions, sites may frequently be grouped or listed off in this way. Importantly, some estates appear to consist only of a track (and precise features located along it). That is, the estate may not satisfactorily be designated by reference to named sites. The following schematic representations should help to explicate the situation more clearly.

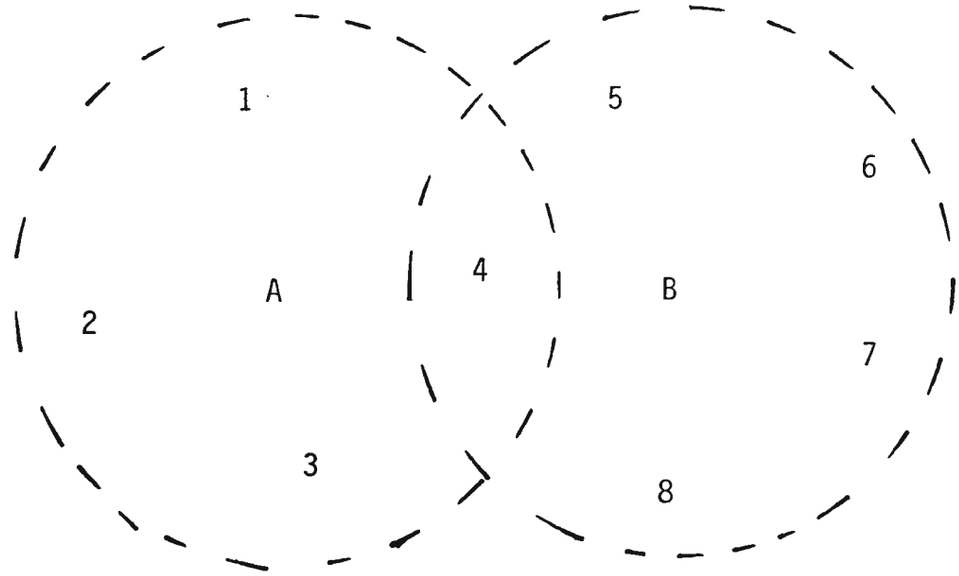
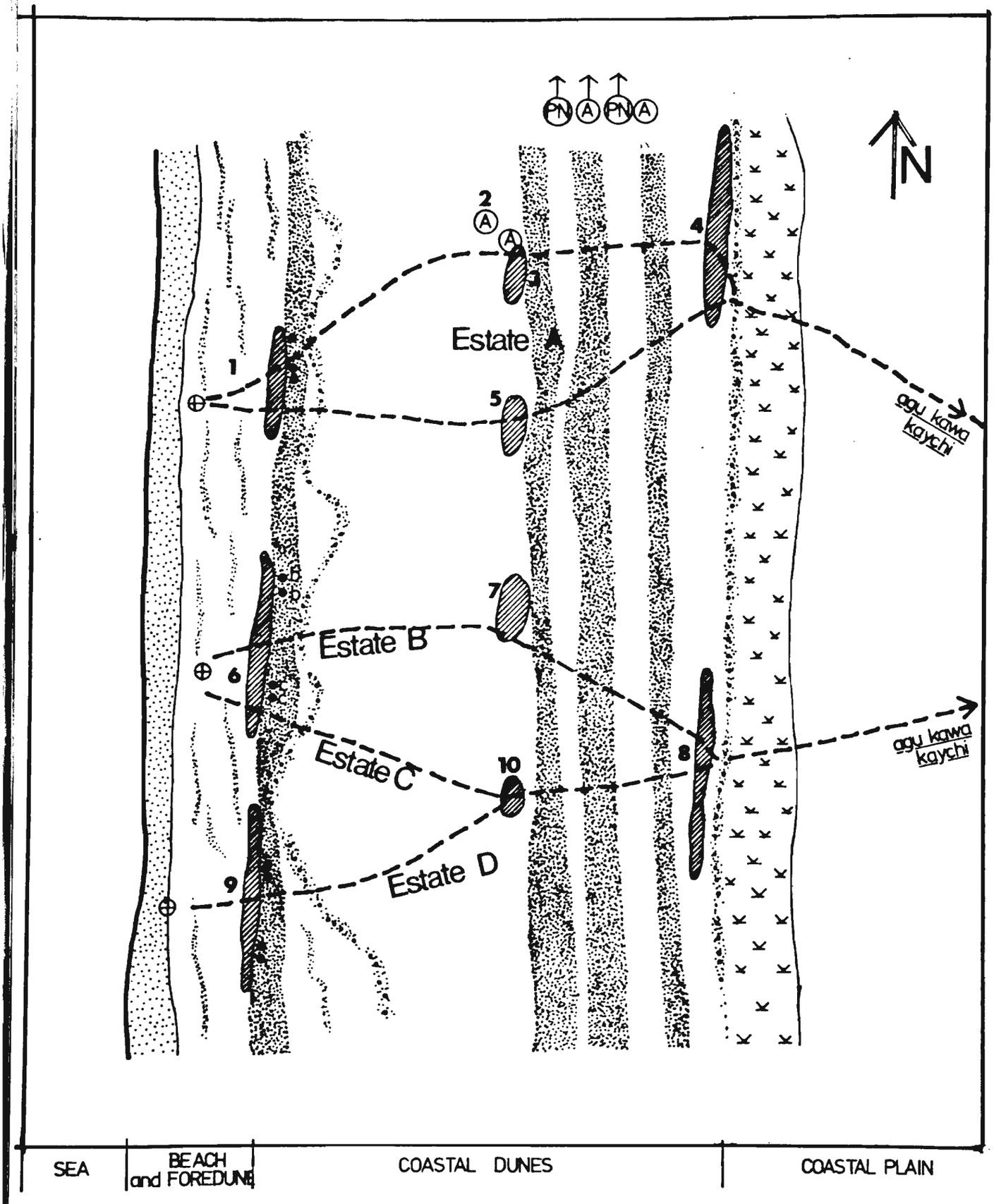


Figure 6. Two stylized estates.

figure 7

SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF TRACKS, SITES AND THE "SITE-LESS ESTATE."



Legend

- Beach
- Exposed dunes
- Scrub line
- Swale
- Swamp
- Campsite
- Prominent tree
- Awu
- Named site
- Well
- Track

SCALE

0 1/2 1KM.

Figure 6 represents a situation similar to that discussed earlier in the chapter. It would seem possible (and legitimate) to specify that Estate A consists of Sites 1, 2, 3 and 4, of which site 4 is held in common with Estate B. Equally it would seem possible (and legitimate) to specify that Estate B consists of Sites 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, of which Site 4 is held in common with Estate A. In some cases such specifications will appear to be adequate. However, in other cases, they will be unacceptable. Figure 7 provides a schematic representation of one such case.

Figure 7 shows a number of different situations:
(a) Estate A controls Site 1 on the coast (marked by a solitary Acacia tree). The campsite is located on the eastern slope of an exposed dune shelving into a shallow swale from which water is available from shallow water throughout the year. The eastern margin of the swale roughly marks the beginning of the "dune woodland". Inland, within the same estate are a number of sites located on or near the track running east from Site 1. Sites 2 and 3 are awu; the latter gives its name to a "dinner camp". Near it, and located on the track is an important crossing point over the "water-cross" (or swale) to a thickly-timbered ridge. Neither the swale nor the ridge may have names at this point though they may be identified by expressions such as "This water-cross runs up to _____", "This ridge finishes off at the river at _____", or "Such-and-such awu is on this same ridge". The track continues across the ridge and follows a well-defined path through the next "water-cross" or swale to another ridge. On the eastern margin there may be an important named campsite (Site 4) in a large cleared area in the scrub and bordering a large swamp on the edge of the coastal plain. If the site is used as a wet-season campsite the scrub may not be

cleared, or alternatively a thick patch will be retained for wet-season house-sites alongside a cleared area used for camping at other times of the year. Running east from this site may be a "road" leading to an important inland site belonging to another estate. For the sake of this presentation, I shall call this site agu kawa kaychi (kawa - east, kaychi - distant). In addition to this first track there may be an alternative southerly track (indicated on the figure as passing through Site 5).

In this particular instance, the sites appear to belong exclusively to a single estate.

(b) To describe the second situation we need to consider two estates at once. On the figure I label these estates B and C respectively. The prominent tree at site 6 may belong exclusively to Estate B; however, members of each estate may have exclusive control of particular wells (and particular shade trees) at the campsite which lies inland of the tree. The wells for estate C may lie at the extreme southern end of the campsite as represented on the figure. Running inland from this campsite are two tracks, referred to locally as the north and south track from Site 6. The northern track passes through Site 7 en route to an important campsite (Site 8). The southern track passes through Site 10 en route to the same important campsite (Site 8). From there a major road leads inland to agu kawa kaychi.

Complicating the situation still further, the third prominent tree on the coast (at Site 9) marks the commencement of another track belonging to another estate (Estate D). This estate has exclusive control of the major campsite (represented as Site 9).

The track from this campsite may join that "owned" by Estate C at Site 10, such that this site and the track running eastwards from it to Site 8 constitute "company land" for both estates (i.e., Estates C and D).

In this situation it is clear that Estate C does not have exclusive control over any individual named site. Moreover, it has only a secondary status with respect to the major coastal campsite (Site 6). The latter is effectively under the control of Estate B. Estate C simply owns wells within the site (here labelled C, to distinguish them from wells belonging to Estate B which are marked D). The distinctiveness of the estate is invested simply in these wells and in the track used by its members in moving between the coast and inland. Informants are well aware of these situations and describe them in terms little different from those I have used here. In this discussion I have also alluded to shade trees in addition to wells. Similarly, in one actual situation, particular individuals from different estates have "private" landing places within a single named site located on the southern bank of the Kendall River near its mouth. Rights in these landings (used for embarking on and disembarking from bark canoes) are transmitted in the normal manner.

Conventional approaches to the question of territorial (and local) organization among Australian Aborigines have consisted of what must now appear to be rather simple-minded attempts to divide maps into discrete and isolable tracts of land which are thought to coincide in some fairly direct way with discrete and isolable social groups. The issue has been further complicated by attempts to establish rational economic grounds to account for the boundaries which researchers draw or endeavoured to draw around local groups.

Initially, my own approach to the field situation relied heavily on the notion of local descent group, and the notion of isolable estates. While these notions have some utility, and while I have no doubt that they exist, even among the Kugu-Nganychara, at least as well-elaborated conceptual constructs, they tend to obscure the reality of many living situations and also the fact that the Kugu-Nganychara are apt to propose other conceptual constructs which accord poorly - at least in any direct way - with notions of estate or unilineal descent.

Especially south of the lower Kendall River and at the mouth of the "Holroyd River", some well-informed informants have suggested that particular estates do not control any named site ("only company"). While fieldwork has not been sufficiently extensive to be able to confirm this state of affairs in detail, situations as outlined above have certainly been investigated on the ground. As a cautionary note I should mention that it has also emerged from my research that estates may be discontinuous in character, i.e., a single estate may consist of a number of non-contiguous sites. Thus it may be that an estate which, in one situation (e.g., as just outlined), lacks real control over any named site, may, in another, control one or more sites.

Be that as it may, the question of tracks or "roads" has opened up a number of important issues. Firstly, for the coastal division, estates are often ranged along tracks which run in a roughly east-west direction. Secondly, it appears that some of these estates may not accurately be specified by reference to named sites. This should not be taken as representing a general methodological problem for estates are commonly referred to by the name

of a principal campsite. However, there is a real difficulty in distinguishing between estate-type rights. For example, we have noted that two estates may each control a separate well (or separate series of wells) within a single campsite. Rights in these wells are presumably transmitted in the same manner as for all estate "property". However, any individual can dig a well at a campsite, presumably with permission. Indeed, it is an easy task to elicit the names of people who have dug wells at a particular campsite. They are by no means members of the owning estate. Clearly this suggests a mechanism whereby particular "families" (to use the term the Kugu-Nganychara commonly use in English) can gain control (or ownership) of particular wells. I shall argue that if a particular individual digs a well and continues to use it over a long period of time (even if erratically), rights to it may be transmitted to his or her descendants.

The problems in analyzing this situation are twofold. Firstly, while ownership may be seen to be clearly linked with use, we would need to distinguish between two types of ownership. An individual could have primary rights of access to, or ownership of, a well without having rights of ownership of the part or all of the named site in which it is located. This constitutes the first form of "ownership". Where an individual has primary rights of access to, or ownership of, a well, at the same time as he (or she) has rights of ownership of the part or all of the named site in which the well is located, we can talk of the second and less ambiguous case of ownership. Secondly, there are difficulties in understanding the conditions in which the first type of "ownership" can be converted into the second type.

In addition to the question of the relationship between ownership and use, this discussion raises another important issue, viz., the internal differentiation of campsites, or, expressed another way, the disposition of residents within a campsite. We shall return to this question in Chapter 11.

If the question of tracks or "roads" has forced us to focus more narrowly than at the level of sites, it also invites us to consider the broader issue of inter-estate relations. In short, the Kugu-Nganychara evidence suggests that mobility throughout the region was high. Some of the "roads" running inland are continually referred to by informants, e.g., the "road" running inland from yangku to pepen. The second quotation prefaced to this chapter refers to a road running from kunamnga to kaha-pepen. The latter place name is of particular interest for it is composed of two elements, kaha, meaning face, and pepen, a major lagoon and campsite situated on "Christmas Creek". The force of the name may be preserved in translation as "the place which faces towards pepen". While the "road" from yangku to pepen is the major track, there are a number of tracks running inland from sites both to the immediate north and to the immediate south of yangku. All converge on kaha-pepen, from whence they proceed as one "main road" to pepen. It is not difficult to conceive that the seizure of another point of entry to the "main road" near to yangku might represent an attempt to gain control over the road, or serve to symbolize political pre-eminence within an area which encompasses a number of estates linked along a common track. Evidence supporting both these interpretations will be presented in Chapter 11.

In sum, territoriality and local organization must be tackled

at a number of levels. By and large the level adopted in this chapter lies mid-way between a close analysis of camplife and a broad analysis of regional or sub-regional politics without dealing with either. In adopting this level I have followed fairly much the conventional approach which takes estates and the local group which is presumed to reside within each estate as the basic units of study. This approach has the advantage of showing clearly some of the formal properties of estates. However, as observed in the treatment here, it reveals little of daily life. This is not a weakness of this particular presentation despite its other deficiencies it represents in fact a weakness of the general approach. The Kugu-Nganychara do not raise estates as the only or, indeed, the major components in their analysis of everyday events or political action. Moreover, by insisting on a formal approach, one runs the risk of implying that estates are formally the same; and, if formally the same, the underlying suggestion must be that they are also similar in actuality. Both implications are incorrect.

Chapter 10 :
'Totemic organization', life crises and ceremonial life: Kugu-Nganychara

Among the Kugu-Nganychara the notion of kam waya is highly elaborated and affects many aspects of social life, as well as the ways in which people see themselves and the world around them. I propose retaining the word 'totem' to refer to this notion. However, I wish to make it clear that 'totem' here refers to a relationship between people and various phenomena, not a relationship between a particular phenomenon and a particular place. That is, it does not relate, at least in any direct way, to what have been referred to in Wik-Mungkana as awa.

In the second part of the chapter I discuss life crises and the major ceremonies for the Kugu-Nganychara region. I do not intend to rehearse information where it differs little from that provided in accounts for the Archer River people. Rather, the aim is to treat issues which McConnel and Thomson either did not encounter or failed to treat adequately. In the Kugu-Nganychara region, ceremonial life is particularly rich; moreover, the ceremonies exhibit apparent structural differences from the Archer River ceremonies.

A. 'Totemic organization':

"My kam waya are just like brother to me;
just like God." (R.K.)

(1) The derivation of the term kam waya/kem waya.

The Kugu-Mu'inh term, kam waya (Uw. kem waya; Iy. kame waya) is equivalent to the Wik-Mungkana term, puul waya (McConnel's pulwaiya). The term, kam/kem, is clearly cognate with the Wik-Mungkana term, kema (Thomson 1972:16; see also McConnel 1934:360-1, where she gives the term kami). Its primary denotatum is MM. Hale (in Sutton 1976:54) lists the following cognate terms: WM. kem(-wayaw; Me. kem; Nr. kem(-yangk.th); Mum. kame-(ling); Um. kami-(chu); and Th. (ngan-)keme. These terms are all said to derive from a Proto-Paman term, *kami, which Hale glosses as "mother's mother".

In Mu'inh, the kin terms, ngathame (underlying form: ngathu - 1 sing.OBL.; kame) and its reciprocal, kaminh, have as their primary denotata MM and ♀DC respectively. It has been suggested that this provides evidence of matrilineal totemism among the Kugu-Nganychara. However, kam waya are clearly transmitted from F and FF. This suggests that the proto-form, *kami, has, as its underlying meaning, parallel grandparent (i.e., FF and MM), not simply female parallel grandparent (i.e., MM). There is support for this argument in that Thomson (1972:28-9) lists the term kami for Yintjina (Thomson's term), and includes both FF and MM among its denotata; the term, kemi, for Wik-Alkana, and includes FF among its denotata (he does not list the kin-type, MM, as the denotatum of any kin term); and the terms, kami wota, and kami-yangkata, for Wik-Ngathara.[1]

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1. There is a problem in these data in that Wik-Ngathara and Wik-Alkana are alternative labels for the same dialect (see Appendix A). It is possible that one set of terms belongs to Wik-Ngathana.

The first term, kami wota, includes FF among its list of denotata (wota is clearly cognate with Wm. wuut, and Mu. wudu, meaning "old man"); the second term, kami yangkata, includes MM among its denotata. The term, kemer, in a language Thomson calls Koko Minjena (1972:30), includes both FF and MM among its denotata. However, this apparently confirmatory datum is possibly misleading, for Sharp (1937:78-9) gives two separate terms in Yir-Yoront for these kin-types: keme, for MM (and not FF); and pen, for FF. As Scheffler points out in an editorial comment (1972:30), Thomson's Koko Minjena is probably the same as Sharp's Yir-Yoront.

(2) The number and character of kam waya.

Each person has a number of kam waya (sometimes more than 20), transmitted from his or her father. (For details, see Appendix C.) Some kam waya are considered more important than others. Whenever kam waya are elicited, informants tend to list them in much the same order, even when interviewed at long intervals. The more important kam waya are recalled easily; less important kam waya may be elicited only with difficulty. Some are only remembered casually when observed by informants while out hunting, or when they crop up during conversation (or are suggested by word- or by idea-association). People are often quite willing to speculate that a particular phenomenon must be their kam waya on the basis that it shares the same name as a phenomenon which is already recognized as kam waya. For example, a number of people have minha yome, "possum", as their kam waya; one informant recalled, after observing a

particular tree while hunting, that this tree, called yuku yome, was also his totem. Similarly, were a fish to bear the label nga'a yome, it could be expected to be added to the list of kam waya as a matter of course. Similarly, certain phenomena are seen as "mate" to other phenomena. This principle - a principle of resemblance or "mateship" - can also be invoked to justify the inclusion of additional kam waya. On this basis, long associational chains can be created. For example, when discussing with a Wik-Iiyanh man (P.M.) whether Europeans did or did not have kam waya, he assigned the following kam waya to me without hesitating: outboard motor (which I had with me at the time and which we used together on regular hunting trips); propeller; whirlpool; running water; helicopter; willy-willy; cyclone; and so on.

Words which appear as elements in personal names are automatically assigned a status as kam waya. Many of these elements are body part terms, e.g., blood, knee, foot, face, nose, testicles, foot, skin. Some rank high in the list of kam waya; others are deduced by informants from the names themselves. Initially, the body parts are those of one of the principal kam waya, e.g., possum or barramundi.

(3) The nature of the 'totemic group'.

The problem of defining the congeries of individuals who share kam waya is similar to the problem already encountered in defining the estate corporation. At a primary level, the two sets of individuals are identical, i.e., each estate corporation has its own set of kam waya. This would already render the situation

complex enough were it not complicated even further by the fact that neighbouring or even distant estate corporations may have one or more kam waya in common.

At the level of the estate corporation, kam waya are held collectively. That is, no individual member is believed to have a special relationship with a particular kam waya which is not also held by other members of the corporation. Members of the corporation are apt to describe the situation in the following way:

nganycha	kam waya	thono-m
1 pl. excl.	"totem"	one, single - ABL

"We (and not them) are all from one totem; we all share a collectivity of totems".

(4) Totems as linguistic labels.

The estate corporation (conceived of here as a totemic corporation) may describe itself or be referred to as a distinctive linguistic unit. The name of the principal kam waya is prefixed by the term kugu, meaning speech or talk. Thus, people who have minha yome, or possum as their kam waya, may refer to themselves, singly or collectively, as kugu-yome or "Possum talk". In English, the expression "I get talk (or language) from possum", is sometimes heard. Outsiders, i.e., people who do not have minha yome as their totem, may refer tothe language as kugu-chöwá, or kugu-cháwana. This term is meant to be somewhat pejorative. Chöwá or chaa is supposed to "mock" or represent the call of the possum.

The linguistic status of these labels is difficult to determine. There are grounds for suggesting that they signify no objective linguistic reality. In other words, there is not language called kugu-yome, "Possum talk", or kugu-toho-toh, "Barramundi talk", and so on. The principal reason is that different estate corporations may share the same "language" from a totemic point of view, but different languages according to more normally accepted linguistic labels, viz., Kugu-Mu'inh, Kugu-Muminh, etc. That is, to give one example, two estate corporations are said - from a totemic viewpoint - to speak kugu-toho-toh, "Barramundi talk". However, linguistically, one corporation is said to speak Kugu-Uwanh; the other is said to speak Kugu-Mangk, or a language resembling Kugu Mangk. The latter comment is somewhat revealing, for the fact is that members of estate corporations cannot totally unambiguously be assigned to one language (or dialect) or another (see also Chapter 6). Informants are apt to make remarks such as "Those people from country _____ speak Kugu-Ugbanh, but it is a little different Ugbanh from that other mob". The "other mob" may be specified 'totemically'. For example, to return to the remark just quoted, it might be re-expressed in the following manner:

'Those Kugu pangku ("Wallaby talk") people talked Kugu-Ugbanh; but it is a little bit different Ugbanh from that kugu-thu'a ("Long spear talk") mob'. In short, no estate corporation (which is also a distinct linguistic unit) can be taken, except from its own point of view, as speaking the "real" Kugu-mu'inh, or the "real" Kugu-Muminh. There may be differences - greater or smaller -

between the way in which a particular language (or dialect) is spoken by members of two different estate corporations, or even within a particular estate corporation. The totemico-linguistic labels can thus be held to be linguistic labels in a real sense, for they may signal real linguistic differences. It can be hypothesized that each estate corporation moves in the direction of linguistic distinctiveness. (This is not to ignore the fact that there may be countervailing pressures towards convergence or uniformity.)

(5) The origin of kam waya

Kam waya are said to have been "left" (wanta) by the two mongkom brothers. One version of their activities was given in Kugu-Uwanh by a woman belonging to estate T2. The man who encountered the mongkom men is commonly referred to as "Old Man wanycham", who belonged to the same estate as the narrator, and is remembered by some people who are still living.

> There were two men sitting down tying up and fastening a fishing net with ironwood gum. They painted the fishing net with white clay and with white paint made from burning the bones of the threadfin. A man was travelling about with three dogs. He saw them. He was frightened and wanted to run away. However, they called out to him. "Don't run away. We two are your uncles, punhthale (MB-). They all sat down. They asked him, "Those three dogs, what are their names?". He answered, "Dogs don't have names". The two men named the dogs. "That one lying down there, his name is thumu thuka. That one, kiiwula. That last one, mukpin." "Right", the man with the dogs said to himself, "the dogs didn't have names. Those two have given them names". Then he returned to his camp. "I saw two men down west". "Right", everyone said. They all went back with him to see the two men. The two men were frightened. They ran off westwards. As they went they cut their way through the scrub. Then they camped

> at a place called kuladha. Next morning they broke camp and headed further and further west. They camped, broke camp, and went on again, ever westward. (Y.Ng.)

Other accounts provide additional details. The old man set out hunting with his dogs from a big camp of people, somewhere north of pu'an; this serves to locate him within estate T2, for pu'an is often given as its southern limit. The dogs smelled out the two men whom the old man originally thought were minya, or animals. They were both white in colour.

Before the mongkom men there were no fishing nets. They also "left" the song form known as thaaj.m (or thayje-mongkom). (Some informants suggest the mongkom left piithal - or pidhal.m. However, they are almost certainly confused in this matter.) At the end of the story, it is stated that a messenger came in the form of a willy-wagtail (minha thuchi kodowa). Arriving "from overseas", from the west, he called out to them: "Cheer". The mongkom men were annoyed and told him to go back without them. They wanted to remain and complete their fishing net. The "messenger bird" returned several times. Eventually, when they saw a large fire in the west, which they interpreted as a message or signal fire, they left, singing a thaaj.m song.

Their final camp is normally located at kuladha, in estate H1. Members of this estate are said to be "close to mongkom".

The mongkom "fixed" their language: "You speak Yam language. You speak Kugu-Ugbanh. Near kuladha the mongkom men are also said to have "left" me'a-awu, the "mosquito story place" (also in estate H1). Some informants say that before the mongkom men came mosquitoes lacked their proboscis. The mongkom men whittled sharp sticks from a bush growing at thumba-awu, upstream on the "Holroyd", thus creating the proboscis. Me'a awu represents their annoyance at being signalled to return west.

As the mongkom men headed west, they left the corub-covered island which earlier (Chapter 8) I noted had been washed away in a cyclone.

(6) Kam waya and naming.

Both the old man and his dogs were originally nameless, nhampampayi (nhampa - name; nhampampa - nhampa reduplicated; -yi - LACKING).

Before the mongkom men came "people used to die without names and used to speak anyhow", i.e., there were no fixed languages or fixed vocabularies for any particular group. Before the mongkom there were no kam waya as well as no names. The mongkom men determined the kam waya; from these they devised languages, dog names and personal names. Most accounts agree that dogs were named

before men. Sometimes different names are given other than those in the above account, e.g., thukan kugu (thukan - scrub turkey; kugu - talk, speech, call); or it is suggested that all dog names (for this estate, T2) should derive from minha thukan. The old man was also asked what his name was. The mongkom men gave him the name wanycham, and specified that his totemico-linguistic affiliation should be kugu-muchuwa (muchuwa - "devil"), "Dead body talk". This is the current totemico-linguistic affiliation of the estate corporation T2 (see Appendix C).

a) Dog names: Dogs stand in the relationship of son or daughter (ngathengke - ♂C, B+C) to their owners. Men tend to own male animals (ku'a pochon); women tend to own female animals (ku'a kuyu or ku'a pu'adha). Dog names vary according to sex.

Names derive mostly from kam waya. However, they can also be derived from place names. The name sited from which the latter category of dog names derive normally fall within the estate of the dogs' owners. However,with shifts of land ownership, such names can end up out-of-phase with current reality.

The naming of dogs before people in the mongkom story reflects actual practice. Dog names are constantly created. Informants commonly claim that they created a particular dog name when they were children. The procedure seems to have been that they would approach

their father to have the name approved; if approved, the names were to become their exclusive property. Sometimes, informants have told me, older men would often like the names and appropriate them for their own dogs. However, having created a name, a man was normally entitled to transmit it to his sons (and, in the case of women, to their BD).

Traditionally, people could be referred to by their dog's name. This is still common practice, especially in recalling the names of people long dead. It may always have served as a convenient device in referring to dead people for the names of the deceased must be avoided (cf. Thomson's remarks for the WM (1946:162)). Moreover in a situation where the repertoire of dog names is greater than the repertoire of personal names (and where the possibility of coining new names is greater), dog names can be used to specify particular individuals more readily than the usual personal names which are often applied to a number of individuals simultaneously. In any case, following the death of a person with the same name they will remain without names for greater or longer periods of time. When applied to people, at least for an initial period, dog names can be distinguished by the fact that they retain the prefix ku'a - dog . No doubt as time advances and the name is more habitually associated with a particular person, the prefix is lost and the name takes on the appearance of an ordinary personal name.

b) Personal names: Personal names divide into three categories: Mu. nhampa a'e (Uw. namp yoko); Mu. nhampa mangaya (Uw. nhampa woynyo); and nhampa kurin (Uw. nhampa kudin).

The first category, nhampa a'e, is equivalent to WM. nhampa pi'ana. It is commonly referred to in English as "big name". The second category, nhampa mangaya, is equivalent to WM. nhampa manya. It is commonly glossed in English as "small name". The third category, nhampa kurin, is equivalent to WM. nhampa kuutana. It is commonly referred to in English as "navel name".

i) "Navel name": The procedure for assigning the "navel name" among the Kugu-Nganychara is similar to that described by McConnel and Thomson for the Archer River. That is, the nhampa kurin is determined by manipulation of the umbilical cord.

The topic of "navel names" is nowadays difficult to pursue systematically. Firstly, the practice of giving "navel names" has ceased in recent years with the introduction of a government policy (in the late 1960s) whereby women living in Aboriginal Reserves on the Peninsula were obliged to have their children under hospital supervision in Cairns. Moreover, there is much vagueness surrounding the actual name given and its status. Informants are rarely certain which name has been assigned to them, whether it should be classified as "big name" or "small name", or whether in fact they do not have all the names of the person who stands in the relationship of nhampa kurin to them, regardless of the status of the name. In short, the actual

name seems unimportant. What is important is the relationship itself. There is never any question as to the identity of the person who stands as one's nhampa kurin.

With only two exceptions in over thirty cases, the person standing as "navel name" to the child was either ngathale (MB-) or ngathukwe (MB+). One exception was a man who stood in the relationship of pama thepa ngathoche (MF) to the child. The other was where a man stood as nhampa kurin to his own daughter. The man himself considered this somewhat improper. In a high proportion of cases (roughly a quarter of the cases), the person involved was an actual MB. In no case was the senior person in the relationship a woman. In other words, only men can be assigned as the "navel name", either to male or female children.

People standing in this special relationship address each other by a special term, ngalurin (underlying form: ngal - 1 dual incl.; kurin - navel) (Uw. ngaludin). An element of familiarity is often involved in the relationship, even joking. The nhampa kurin "holds" the umbilical cord of the child; and he gives presents to the child while it is young. Nowadays these gifts take the form of baby napkins, towels, blankets, or talcum powder. The relationship endures during the lifetime of the two parties involved.

ii) "Big names" and "small names"" There are some real difficulties also in pursuing the question of "big" as opposed to "small names". One difficulty is largely semantic in character. In Mu'inh, the terms

a'e and mangaya can be translated, at one level, as meaning big and little. Large objects can be referred to as a'e and small objects as mangaya. However, in dealing with such notions as kugu a'e, "small words", these translations seem to be of little help. In all dialects (or languages) there are multiple terms which may be applied properly to the same phenomenon, or to the same set of phenomena. In cases where the same term applies to the same phenomenon across a number of dialects (such that informants are apt to state that the term is kugu nganychara, translated as "we all use that word") then it is likely to be classified as kugu mangaya. In cases where the term is dialect-specific, i.e., it does not occur in other dialects (or languages), it is classified as kugu a'e. In other words, some terms are in general usage across a range of dialects; some terms are confined (or tend to be confined) to a single dialect. The first set of terms can be said to have a generic character (used by a wide range of people); the second set of terms can be said to have a specific character (used by a restricted set of people). The second set, by stressing the specificity of certain phenomena, stresses the distinctiveness or the specificity of the dialect (or language) in which they are used. To pursue the argument further: all species may be divided between large and small. The large (a'e) constitute a more restricted set of items than those which may be classified as small (mangaya). Smallness, in any case, is a logical precondition of becoming larger. Smallness represents the general condition, largeness a more specific condition. Conversely, those individual members of species (yuku, minha, nga'a, or mayi) which achieve maturity (or

largeness) become the representatives *par excellence* of their species (and thus acquire a special generic quality).

Bearing these arguments in mind, it seems possible to understand the meaning and the use of the terms, nhampa a'e and nhampa mangaya. In short, nhampa a'e are more restricted in their field of application than nhampa mangaya. Both, however, have a generic quality, though at different levels.

Each estate (or totemic) corporation has a number of big names which by and large serve to distinguish it from other corporations. This is despite the fact that members of a number of corporations may share kam waya or totems in common. I refer to corporations linked in this way as linked estates. Details of linked estates are provided in Appendix C.

The extent of sharing may vary. For example, in the case of estates X5 and X6, where segmentation of a single lineal group can be demonstrated in fairly recent historical times, the sharing is said to be complete. Even in this case it is interesting to note the different ranking of kam waya between the two estates. In estate X5, the first eight kam waya listed by the senior male member of the estate corporation were (in order): minha yome, "possum"; minha pinba, "squeaker"; yuku ngada, spider; nga'a thochon, "jardine" or saratoga; nga'a maykun, "rifle-fish" (Archer-fish); nga'a poykolo, catfish; yuku wongbo, "beetle" (Rhinoceros beetle); and yuku thochon, tree.

The senior (and only) member of X6 listed his first five kam waya in the following order: minha yome, "possum"; minha penyjon, "little bird"; nga'a windi, "stingaree fish - long-tail"; nga'a margala, "big stingaree - long-tail"; and nga'a kulang, "like shark". At that point, he called on the senior member of estate X5 (the man who gave the earlier list) for assistance. The latter immediately gave minha pinba (item 1 in his list) and two other parrot species; then nga'a poykolo (item 6 on his list); nga'a engka (equivalent to nga'a thochon, item 4 on his list); then yuku wongbo (item 7 on his list). In short, he rapidly returned to the items to which he himself assigns high priority.

The listing of stingrays as items 3 and 4 for X6, and the exclusion of minha pinba and yuku wongbo (especially the latter), appear to be far from accidental. The "boss" of the estate lists only one personal name - minha-kiga-puugam. The name derives from the principal kam waya, which is minha yome, "possum". It is classified as nhampa a'e. He denies that he has any "small name", or any other "big names". However, his English name clearly reflects items 3 and 4.

Correspondingly, the "boss" of X5 ranks minha-untu, derived from minha yome, his principal kam waya, as his "biggest name". He has a second "big name" - agu-wuk-rampe - which derives from yuku wongbo, "beetle" (item 7 on his list). He shares both these names with his sons. He also has a "small name" - peR.t - which comes

"from an old fellow at Mitchell River who has the name peR.t, too". This is a case of distantly-linked corporations. The linked estate lies north of the Mitchell River and is possibly Sharp's "clan I-6...Possum" (see Sharp 1937:340; also his map p.267). The name itself is undoubtedly a corruption of the English word 'parrot'; it has been borrowed as a "language word", i.e., as belonging to an Aboriginal language. It is stated to be derived from minha pinba, the Rainbow lorikeet or "squeaker". This name is not shared by his sons.

Turning to another linked estate (X4), the members of which are described as "full story, one language" with members of X5, the name peR.t is also the "small name" of one of its members; however, the "big names" (for the men) are quite different: tha'u-nhanyi and walule, both derived from "possum"; and aynycha-tha'u-kuuwa, derived from "beetle". In summary, although both sets of "big names" derive from the same two kam waya, the names themselves are different. As for women's names, it appeared that women belonging to estate X5 were given names (all derived from "possum", and classified as "big names") from women belonging to estate X4. These women stood in the relationship of "FZ-" to the women of X5. That is, there seems to be less concern to maintain the distinctiveness of "big names" within estate corporations when the names apply to women rather than to men. This seems to be a general state of affairs.

To complete the picture I wish to discuss briefly the other linked estate (i.e., also specified as kugu-yome, "possum talk") within the "Christmas Creek" zone. Informants have given one "big name" - pungkundu - which is said to derive from "possum", the principal totem. Another name - minha-tha'u-pipi, also derived from "possum" - is classified as nhampa mangaya or "small name". A third name - komben - derives from yuku wongbe, "beetle". Its status has not been specified.

There is also evidence that "big names" may be ranked within a single estate or totemic corporation. Within estate T2 there is a set of eight siblings, including five brothers. The eldest brother has never married and has no children. The next two brothers are married, but neither has produced any sons, only daughters. The next brother has three sons who, given the rules established in the previous chapter, would be structurally junior to any sons born even at this stage to their father's elder brothers. Their father is quite conscious of the situation and has attempted to manipulate the situation to his sons' advantage by the careful allocation of names. He notes that his oldest brother is called ngalambuugam; his second oldest brother is called wanycham; his third eldest brother is called wobe; he himself is called minha-badha. As for his younger brother, he was initially uncertain whether his name was wanycham or ngalambuugam, (the same as one or other of the two oldest brothers). Finally he decided his name was macheko, named, curiously, after a man (classificatory brother, or "cousin-brother") from a neighbouring estate, T1. As my

informant stated, "That name, macheko, is for my brother and for Old ———; not kuutana name; just called after him, no matter 'outside family' and different kam waya".

My informant stated that the names of the two oldest brothers, ngalambuugam and wanycham, are "big names" (Uw. nhampa yoko). The name wobe (for the third brother) is derived from a campsite by that name, on the beach north of pu'an. A male predecessor spent so much time there, sheltering in a cave, that he became known by the place name. My informant's own name is classified as nhampa wcynyo, or "small name". Now, the "big name", wanycham, is said to be "for everybody, for full family". The same comment applies to ngalambuugam. Thus it appears that the senior males in each generation are distinguished from other males in the same generation by becoming the foci of names which formally belong to the totem corporation as a whole. That is, it appears the senior males can take "big names" as their personal names. Junior males are designated by names which are much less bound up with corporate identity; and may in fact be assigned names which do not even belong to the corporation itself. Thus, personal names can serve to indicate the structural centrality or marginality of individuals within the corporation.

My informant, being aware of the significance of the names, assigned the names of the two senior brothers to his eldest son. His grounds were, firstly, that the name, ngalambuugam, was the name of

the eldest son (and senior male) in the previous generation, and his son should take the same name, being the eldest male in his generation; and secondly, that he should take the name wanycham not only because he resembles but also because he is left-handed like the "first wanycham", the old man who is the central figure in the mongkom story (see above). As for his second son, he takes the same name as the father, a decision justified on the grounds of close physical resemblance. My informant comments:

> You can tell sometimes if someone looks the same as you... I looked like T's brother, my pinya (his FB+, from whom he takes his name) and N (his second son) looks a bit the same way. J (his eldest son) looks like old wanycham. Even my mother says he looks the same. That old man was left-handed too, like J. Same as me; I remind T of her brother. Old J here (at Aurukun) gave me his name, J. He said I had a long head like him...

At the time this information was given, his third son had not been born. He proposed calling him keenge:

> If I have another son I might call him keenge. They used to call him Old King. He was my FFF. I would call him nhengk (S); he would call me ngachi (F). He was a wild old man, wudu keenge. He had lots of wives. I don't understand the meaning much of that name. He died a long time ago, before MacKenzie. I never saw him.

(This is the same man after whom the "King River" or "Thuuk River" is named. It is possible that keenge is a corruption of the English word.) He also suggested that if his second eldest brother were to have a son, he could call him wobe (the third ranked name in the parental generation).

On the basis of these data, it seems fairly clear that there are a number of mechanisms open to the politically ambitious in sponsoring their sons, beyond those touched on in the previous chapter. Physical resemblance to a predecessor may be used not only as a basis for establishing a casual identification between the living and the dead through naming; it may also be used to suggest the transmission of a set of characteristics and capacities from the past into a living member of the corporation. If the predecessor was a man of high status, the evidence may be used to attach a higher status to the individual concerned than would be justified on structural grounds, i.e., in terms of structural seniority or juniority. In short, there appear to be a number of cross-cutting principles which build a great deal of 'play' into the system. At any moment, an individual may be politically advantaged by invoking one principle, but politically disadvantaged by invoking another. In the examples given where individuals outside the corporation, and with different kam waya, may be imputed or may impute to themselves a resemblance to a person within the corporation (through having a similarly-shaped head, or on some other basis), the whole 'totemic' structure is threatened. But, equally, it can be threatened from within, by the differential status attributed to individuals on structural grounds, and the rights allocated to them of abrogating names, properly the signifiers *par excellence* of corporate identity, to their personal use; and by the response to this situation, observed elsewhere but here again, whereby an individual chooses to carve out his own niche, either by identifying himself so closely with a particular site that it becomes his personal

property, or by some other mechanism. Squatter's rights are powerful with land; they may be equally powerful with names.

(7) Ngalampa - "namesake": Members of the same corporation employ the term ngalampa, or simply nhampa-ey (or nhampa-ow) in addressing each other (ngalampa - underlying from ngal - 1 dual incl., nhampa - name). In English this term of address is rendered as "namesake". This parallels Thomson's reference to the WM. term, ŋällamp, "we of the same name". He indicates that the term is employed between members of a single clan when they "sit down together" (1946:162). Use of this term between close genealogical kin (kaha-kunyji) who share the same kam waya is obligatory. Personal names should be avoided. Their use is considered impolite. Avoidance of personal names between close agnates (as well as other kin) still applies today and affects equally "bush" or traditional names, and English names.

The term is also used between members of linked corporations even though they may not share the same names either in part or in toto; they need not even share the full range of kam waya with each other. Members of such linked corporations may refer to each other as (putative) agnates (see McKnight's comment, 1971:160, already reported in Chapter 6), and the rules of structural seniority/juniority are used in reckoning the appropriate kin terms to be applied in each generation. In this sense, linked corporations might be seen to be senior or junior segments of clans.

Certainly, the sharing of kam waya may be used for organizing social relations over long distances. It is certainly important in the structure of winychinama (discussed later in this Chapter). In more recent times, it has been used to justify intercommunity visiting between Aurukun and Edward River. There are two corporations in the wider Kirke River region affiliated, totemically, with brolga; for various reasons, about 70 people living at Aurukun but originally drawn from this region wished to visit Edward River. They arranged accommodation for themselves, not among the Kugu-Nganychara who reside in that community and who, tradtionally, constitute their southern neighbours, but among a number of Thaayorre people on the grounds that at least some of them shared "Brolga talk" in common. Their actual languages are in fact mutually unintelligible.

Nevertheless, such linguistic evidence need not discount the possibility of an actual or putative shared ancestor at some time in the past. The more difficult argument for those wishing to espouse the notion of enduring clans is that the term ngalampa may be used between any two people who are held to be agnates. Now, for any Ego, all men in the previous generation (at least, terminologically) must be "fathers" (actual or putative agnates) or "uncles" (actual or putative uterine kin). Within his own generation, all men are either "brothers" ("cousin-brothers") or "cousins"; and so on. For all those people he may address by a term meaning "father" or "brother" or "son", and so on, he may use the term "namesake". Such people may not share names or even kam waya. However, in describing "name-sake" relationships they will talk as though their kam waya are shared,

and as though they are close agnates. See, for example, the following account. The narrator speaks Kugu-Uwanh; his principal kam waya is nga'a wunggam, barramundi; his totemico-linguistic affiliation is Kugu-toho-toh, "Barramundi talk"; his estate is K5. He shares no kam waya with the people to whom he refers and who come from the Kirke River region (Wik-Ngathara); he is not linked with them genealogically; in short, there is nothing to suggest that there is anything more than a friendship relationship between the two (quite distant) corporations.

> U. and H. F and S call me ngalampa; I call them back ngalampa too. We don't call each other's name... I call U. and H. ngalampa because H. is just like a real brother to me (ngathake - B-) and I'm like big brother (ngathunye - B+) for him; because his father and my father, well, it is just like they are from one father and mother; because we are a bit close. Our bush names are just like one; just like one kam waya to us: taipan, lightning - sort of cousin kam waya to ours. I could give one of my bush names to H.'s children. H.'s two little girls are named after my sister. They use ngalamp when talking to my sister. My father called U. ngalamp.
>
> Any of those cousins, even though bush names not one, kam waya not one, we call ngalamp; I don't know why.

K5 is similarly linked with a "Brolga talk"/WM. corporation on the Kirke River, a "Jellyfish - Stingray" / Kugu-Muminh corporation from the "Holroyd", and a "Wallaby" (kugu-pangku)/Thaayorre corporation from south of the Chapman River. Members of corporations linked in this way may refer to each other as kunyji malam, translated in English as "stepcousins",[1] or "outside cousins".

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1 Here "cousin" is an abbreviated form of "cousin-brother" which is the common Aboriginal English term meaning male parallel cousin.

If there was a rule of marriage such that marriages could be contracted only between corporations the members of which did not stand in "namesake" relationships to each other, it would seem that the logical outcome would be a moiety system, and kam waya could be grouped collectively as belonging to either one or the other moiety. No such arrangement exists; nor would it seem possible in a situation, as applies among the Kugu-Nganychara, where estate corporations are not necessarily exogamous. Moreover, there is no injunction against marriage with someone who shares the same kam waya. If there are clans, they are certainly not exogamous in character.

(8) Personal identification with kam waya:

(a) Eating of kam waya: There are normally no restrictions on cooking or eating one's kam waya, although beliefs and practices vary somewhat from individual to individual and depending on circumstances. One male informant quite spontaneously pointed to a jabiru and said that since it was his kam waya he would not eat it. He also requested that it not be killed in his presence. Other people are equally adamant that there were no restrictions on eating kam waya. The most plausible account was that kam waya are normally eaten; however, if one "felt sorry" for one's kam waya one did not eat it. It is difficult to specify the circumstances in which one would either feel or not feel "sorry" for one's kam waya. It might be expected that if

one's kam waya behaved oddly, or its appearance coincided with a death of a member of the corporation, etc., then the animal or fish may be considered under its aspect of kam waya rather than simply as game. Hunting is never perceived as a brutal or brutalising experience. One garners rather than destroys. Game is killed in a very matter-of-fact and methodical manner. Consequently, it is relatively easy to understand that the two aspects can normally be kept separate.

(b) Kam waya as protector: There is a belief that if one is under severe threat from a sorcerer while alone in the bush, it is possible to transform oneself into one's kam waya and thereby escape. However, not all kam waya offer the possibility of such transformations. There is a covert distinction made between animate and inanimate kam waya: a person under threat may transform himself into a bird, fish or other animal; transformations into such things as trees are considered impossible. Multiple transformations - e.g., from man to bird to reptile to mammal, and so on - are considered possible.

The following account was given to me by a Kendall River man (R.K.):

> Let me tell you story. When those old people out in bush before, this pourri-pourri business, you know (i.e. sorcery), if someone sneak up on them and get the better of them, they can turn into bird, kam waya. If they near water, swamp, can turn into fish or snake; if dry land can turn into minya, bird... If J's mob [kugu uthu (or kugu muchuwa, "dead body" or "devil")/ kugu-uwanh],can turn into devil... Yes, they can be invisible.

Men traditionally carry spears, woomera, firesticks (thumu pupi), and dilly bags as their daily accoutrements. If a man is obliged to transform himself into one of his minh kam waya or nga'a kam waya, his accoutrements are also subject to transformations: the spears become snakes (i.e., keka become ngache); the woomera turns into a blue-tongued lizard (i.e., thuli becomes wali); and the firesticks are converted into a brolga (i.e., thumu pupi become kor'a). According to informants, this last transformation occurs 'because the firesticks have long "legs" and a red head, like a brolga'. Dilly bags become flying foxes which are conventionally thought to resemble dilly bags. In fact, the black flying fox (Pteropus alecto) is sometimes called by a term meaning "old dilly bag"; and the red flying fox (Pteropus scapulatus) is sometimes called by a term meaning "new dilly bag". When the danger passes and the man resumes human form, he whistles and his goods return, either rushing back through the grass or, in the case of the dilly bags, fluttering down at his feet.

A young man (from estate H1) gave the following account of the process in English. It is of interest because it incorporates transformations affecting European goods:

> When you land you turn into a person, light fire and put smell on yourself; warm yourself; might stand up for a while, then those spears might come like a snake.

> Spears ...when they turn back to spears you put smell [cf. discussion of "baptism" in Chapter 9]. Clothes same way. Knife, or bullet. As bullets come towards you make crack, like whip or cracker. You might get fright, get nervous. They might fall just in front of you. Knife...crawl like snake, death adder.

(c) Kam waya and dreams: People and their kam waya are clearly identified in dreams. People say that if a man dreams about somebody whose kam waya are dangerous, for example, a poisonous snake or a saltwater crocodile, he must approach the person and tell him first thing in the morning, otherwise the dreamer is liable to be bitten or come to harm.

There is a general belief that the telling of dreams is a therapeutic exercise. However, if a person dreams about someone whose kam waya is a prized game food, the dreamer will not inform anyone. Instead, people say, he will sneak off and go hunting. It is guaranteed that the kam waya will appear and make itself easy to spear, e.g., fish and stingrays will expose themselves on dry mudbanks or sandbanks. The fish are never of mediocre quality. They are always of great size (nga'a nhingadhe, "mother one") or, in the case of stingrays, young ones with enormous "fresh" livers (kogom puugam). When the hunter returns, he must then tell the person who appeared in the dream. Correspondingly, the person who was the subject of the dream will always feel off-colour, perhaps nauseous. To him it is a sign that someone has dreamed of him and perhaps that his minha kam waya will be speared.

(d) Kam waya and teeth avulsion: When people are having an upper incisor tooth removed, according to the local practise of tooth avulsion, it is believed that if their kam waya is "strong" (thayan), the extraction will be difficult and perhaps painful; if the kam waya is "weak" the extraction will be swift and painless. Difficult extractions are said to afflict people with the following kam waya:

(i) minha yome ("possum"), because the possum has a powerful foot (yome tha'u thayan; tha'u - foot);

(ii) minha poole ("carpet snake"), because, in catching carpet snakes, one has to reach one's arm into tree holes to pull them out; carpet snakes are apt to coil round one's arm, making it difficult to remove from the hole (minha pungku thayan; pungku - ball, coil, round lump);

(iii) minha kane ("freshwater crocodile"), because it lies in the water like a rock;

(iv) minha monte ("jabiru"), because it has powerful tendons in its legs - yagi thayan, minha kam waya thayan (yagi - tendon, "string"): i.e., strong tendons, a strong kam waya.

Easy extractions are said to occur with the following kam waya:

(i) minha wunggam (barramundi), because it is a fish, because it lives in water and because it has soft flesh (i.e., its flesh becomes rotten quickly; kempa punha);

(ii) minha thupan ("salmon"), for the same reasons as barramundi (minha kam waya nga'a, minha nga'a kempa punha);

(iii) ngu'unyji ("bushfire"), because it burns quickly; because it is "light"'

(iv) minha thukan ("bush turkey"): the tooth will loosen quickly because the shells of bush turkey eggs are brittle, and also because the nests are easily robbed.

In this matter, as in many others, there does not appear to be any absolute truth. Opinions vary from informant to informant, depending especially on their personal loyalties to their own kam waya. "Strong" is perceived more positively than "weak"; and probably no kam waya is unambiguously strong or unambiguously weak. Moreover, each person has a number of kam waya from which he can choose. However, orthodoxy is not far removed from the examples just given, for they tend to be drawn from the principal kam waya: possum, carpet snake, crocodile, and barramundi are all primary totems. Jabiru and bush turkey (for estate HU1 and estate T2 respectively) rank highly, and serve, in a sense, to distinguish two linked corporations from each other (kugu-uthu/Wik-Iiyanh, on the one hand; kugu-uthu/Kugu-Uwanh, on the other). "Salmon" (minha thupan) and grassfire (ngu'unyji) are both important kam waya for linked corporations (kugu-chiichi/Kugu-Muminh) south of the Kendall River.

(e) Kam waya and behaviour:

(i) Fighting: In serious fights people are said to "mock" their kam waya, i.e., they begin to copy the movements of their principal kam waya, to use its call and even to take on its physical appearance. The following account was given by a Kendall

River man (kugu-toho-toh or "Barramundi talk"/Kugu-Uwanh):

> Sometimes - I don't suppose you noticed those people at Edward River, P.M. and that mob (Kugu-toho-toh/ Kugu-Mangk) - when they in fight they mimic that kem waya. Start off slowly, just like barramundi. When they get angry, move fast. People try to copy their kem waya.
>
> If P. ("Possum"/Kugu-Mu'inh) and I had a fight I'd come up slowly, sideways, moving one leg behind just like barramundi tail. P. might call back: chaa, chaa, just like possum. (R.K.)

(ii) Sleeping behaviour: People whose principal kam waya is nocturnal will claim that they are apt to stay awake at night. "Only when the first light comes do I really settle down for a deep sleep, like my kam waya, possum." Correspondingly, those whose kam waya is diurnal feel most active during daylight hours.

(iii) General behaviour and physical resemblance: People's general behaviour, especially that of children, is often interpreted in terms of kam waya affiliation. Sometimes the children themselves are conscious of the interpretation and will behave in the appropriate way to attract attention. For example, a small boy whose principal kam waya is possum was fond of hanging upside down in trees and calling out, "Look! Just like my kam waya". People commented that he had big round eyes, just like a possum.

(f) Naming avoidance: In everyday discourse, the term kam waya is used continuously. People generally try not to refer to a phenomenon by its proper name if it happens to be their kam waya, or that of the person to or about whom they are talking. Instead, the speaker uses locutions such as minha kam waya or nga'a kam waya or yuku kam waya, combined with the appropriate possessive pronoun. This is especially true of the major totems. There are no strong negative sanctions governing this practice (though it may be likened to calling the name of a "dead body"). It is simply part of conversational etiquette.

As a special case, individuals may refer to totems belonging to their mother as kaath waya or ngathidhe waya (kaath, ngathidhe - M). This does not mean that they can claim them as their own; in short, there is no system of matrilineal totemism in the society. Use of the term, kaath waya, implies no special relationship between the user and the animal, plant, etc., thus designated, except a strong sentimental bond.

(9) Kam waya and awu:

Apart from the mongkom story there are no Kugu-Nganychara accounts of the creation of the kam waya. On the surface this is a very different situation than that described by McConnel for the Archer River. In the mongkom story the kam waya are assigned on what appear

to be totally arbitrary grounds, and from the outside. Among the Archer River people, there are creative accounts which involve most, if not all, puul waya (see Appendix B). However, it is arguable whether these stories are concerned with the assignation of puul waya as such, or not. A more reasonable interpretation is perhaps that the puul waya are pre-assigned, and that the accounts focus on their activities as they go about as men and women (cf. the common Kugu-Nganychara remark that "kam waya were men and women before"). The accounts invariably conclude with the selection (nor necessarily deliberate or conscious) by the puul waya of the sites where they will "sink down" or "stop", i.e., where they will create their awa (see, for example, the story entitled The Old Woman and the Dilly-bags in McConnel 1957:71-73). In short, on the Archer River, in contrast to the Kugu-Nganychara, there is no explanation offered of the origin of 'totems'.

However, a more crucial variation is the fact that stories of the sort recorded in considerable numbers by McConnel for the Archer River, and conforming largely to the pattern of the story given as an example above, are almost entirely lacking among the Kugu-Nganychara. Indeed, they are totally absent from the coastal division. The few that exist are confined to the inland division.[1] Apart from these few

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1. The "beetle story" probably belongs to this category. The following version was given, as transcribed, in English (J.Ng.):

> Beetle (Rhinoceros beetle) pretends to be sick. Two pretty girls, single. Big sister, married to Beetle, make arrangement to shift camp. Had big camp. Morning time, ready to go over to shift camp. Then Beetle still in bed, pretending to be sick. Wife said to Beetle," Alright, you

stories, there is nothing which specifically links kam waya with awu. Moreover, there is no Kugu-Nganychara notion that the two should necessarily be linked, or, as they themselves would describe it, be "in one". At a concrete rather than at a conceptual level, a quick review of Appendix C confirms that there is a low correspondence between the two orders of phenomena, more especially in the coastal division. It signals the greatest single variation between the Kugu-Nganychara, taking the region as a whole, and the Archer River. This issue will be taken up in detail in Part III.

The corpus of 'myths' or "stories" of the Kugu-Nganychara typically concern - in the coastal division - the activities of "travelling men" (and, in one case, a "travelling lady") who, like the mongkom men, introduce certain cultural innovations, "leave" awu, and, in many cases, major ceremonies. Short summaries of these "stories" are provided in the sections labelled Initiation ceremonies/rites de passage, Other ceremonies, and Death.

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1. (Cont.) ready now?" Beetle (replied), "I sick". She talk, "Come, I lift you. Nobody helping us. I'll carry you". Beetle said, "No, I am too heavy for you. You are lady ... so somebody else will have to carry me, like two strong people." Lady: "Oh well, I'll ask my uncle, kaal (MB-)." Then, "No, your uncle is not strong enough to carry me." Then she said, "I'll ask my brother, if he willing." Then she went and asked her brother. Then he said, "O.K., I'll carry Beetle". Then he went over and asked Beetle if he well; and (told him) he could carry him. Beetle said, "No, you are thin and small. You can't been carry me too far". Then she (the wife) changed her mind. She said, "O.K., I'll ask my two sisters". He snoring, pretending not to hear. Then she went and asked her two sisters, "How about you two carrying our brother-in-law?" Then (they) went over. He laying down, belly down. "Right, brother-in-law.

(B) Life crises:

(1) Birth.

I have earlier dealt exhaustively with the question of birth among the Archer River (see Chapter 5). In most respects, the events surrounding child-birth are parallelled in the Kugu-Nganychara. For this reason, I propose only to bring forward data which show differences with the Archer River region, or which may help clarify contentious issues. If they fail to clarify, then, at least, they may broaden the debate. In addition, McConnel and Thomson failed to treat certain issues, notable among them the question of spirit conception.

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1. (Cont.) You ready?" Everybody pack up their luggage. "So now my two sisters can lift you up, because you are too heavy for one person." Then he said, "Don't carry me belly up please. Carry me belly down". Then they asked Beetle, "Why don't you lay belly up?" "No," he said, "I got crook back. I was carrying my emu yesterday". And they lift Beetle up. One grabbed shoulder, younger sister grabbed leg. Then they looked at each other, and they said, "What a funny man! He playing a trick for us ... He not sick". "Oh well," (said Beetle), "you two can carry me now." Then they carried and they carried him about 5 mile. Everybody was at a new camp. Only these three left behind. Then he said to those two girls, "We can cross this shallow part of river". But it was not really shallow; really deep and blue. Then, before they cross river, didn't cross, just threw that old man down in the river. Beetle get youngest sister, then eldest one. Took them for his wife! Same day he made family; in one day! (Children) born too! One girl and one boy.

Information from the Kugu-Nganychara supports the view that the Wik were (and are) aware of the broad facts of bi-sexual reproduction. Although classing the matter "women's business", male informants refer to an egg located in the womb which is built up of male sperm and female blood. The cessation of menses indicates conception. The blood goes to "feed" the egg; similarly, repeated acts of copulation are required to provide semen to "build up" the egg (and to initiate conception). Men believe that women have contraceptive techniques available to them. They consist of various unknown rootstocks which women crush and apply externally to the region of the stomach. Salt is also believed to be a contraceptive (or abortifacient); taken orally it will "curdle the egg".

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1. (Cont.) Those people that been leave those three behind, they had their camp ready, (at) thopenen. People arrived where organized to go. They was waiting for those three then. They didn't get to camp. Get to camp just about dark and then they (i.e., the people already in camp) saw these two babies. "Hello", they was shouting, "Beetle got two babies". And Beetle said, "These two little babies, they're not mine. Those babies from Moon". Then Moon said to Beetle, "Those two little babies, they'se yours. You're the daddy, the daddy of those two babies". He owned up. Alright. Eldest sister of those two girls she said, "Alright, you two sisters can have my husband, so I can go single". (She already had children by Beetle). Everybody agreed - father of two girls, uncles (MB), grandpa... Then they went out fishing, everybody; lilies hunt, kangaroos hunts, emus...

Old Beetle minding those two babies, then those two girls were swimming for lily roots (from about 7.00 a.m. until 12.00 noon)... Then this other little boy crying. Then old Beetle was shouting: "Hey, where you two girls? This boy crying." Then he used to start swearing, using bad words,

Excessive promiscuity in young girls is believed to induce infertility. Indeed, there is a special ritual performed on young children to encourage non-promiscuous behaviour. The genitals of infants are "warmed" by old women, who recite formulae asking that the genitals not grow too large. Young men are continually warned against sexual over-indulgence: "Don't waste yourself; otherwise you'll lose your condition". Promiscuity is regarded as socially destructive and young men or women who "run wild" in traditional times ran the risk of spearing, usually at the hands of members of their own families.

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1. (Cont.) swearing those two girls. They was diving for those lilies, then bob up out of water. Then old Beetle used to stop. When they used to bob up he used to stop swearing. Those two made to dive; then he used to start swearing. Then, for while, they heard old Beetle swearing, from underwater. Sometimes when you swim you can hear people talking. Then they shouted to Beetle... "You was swearing us, eh?" He said, "I didn't swear you". Alright, then they came out from water. Then they said to Beetle, "Well, we can mind those two children. You can swim for lilies now." And he said, "Alright". Beetle was swimming in water after lilies. Those two girls started swearing Beetle, swearing bad words, and when he bobbed up, they used to stop, just the same. Then Beetle heard those two girls just the same. He asked those two girls, "I heard you two girls swearing at me". So he said, "I'm getting knocked up now. We might as well sit together and make funs (copulate)". Then they get some lilies and mud-shell (freshwater mussels) and they tied lily with tea-tree bark. Then old Beetle was carrying those lilies and two girls carrying children. Then they got to camp then. Everybody there who had gone out hunting. Everybody sharing out those emus and kangaroos. Old Beetle sharing out those lilies and mud-shells, at big camp. Then they scattered.

In a comment which links both themes, viz., physical paternity and promiscuity, an informant said of unmarried men "Single man can't find a baby. But if he chasing round after a girl, well, just same way, will get story from yamstick or pelican story, all same way." The implication is that young men should not indulge in illicit liaisons with young women: "If young man, if good man, can't get baby." In other words, the link between sexual intercourse and conception is clearly made.

People state that they can determine the sex of the unborn child by the "condition" of the father: if the child is a boy, the father will retain his "condition"; if it is a girl, the father will waste away or "lose his condition". This again indicates the link between the father and the child. As a first child, people tend to

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1 contd The events all occur within estate HU1. Although the story does not describe the allocation or the selection of awu, it is significant that wongbe-awu, the Rhinoceros beetle "story-place", is situated within the estate, at thopenen. A member of the estate corporation ("Dead body"/ Iiyanh) also reports that there is also a thaaj.m song for Beetle, sung in Iiyanh:

> Singing little boy and girl; had them in his lap. One lay down by himself, asleep. Girl in lap; boy on left. Trying to make them sleep. After, he sang out for two mothers swimming about for lilies:
>
> pukpe inu kana payayin-ow ("Child here now crying. Come!")
>
> Sing that place now, agu punhthanyji, where they sank down. Ironwood fork (thapa yongko, often associated with death or mortuary sites) there somewhere. Can't see because (it is) underwater.

The Rhinoceros beetle is kam waya to X5 and linked corporations on "Christmas Creek".

prefer a boy. In the case of twins, one of the children is exposed or killed. (Taking the Wik region as a whole, in the case of a pair of mixed-sex twins, it appears to be the girl who is retained. Moreover, birth order does not seem to be a factor[1].)

From the Kugu-Nganychara data most births occur within the mother's own estate. Whether this reflects customary residential arrangements or a preference on the part of women to seek the support of their mothers and other close female kin during childbirth is uncertain. It probably involves both factors. (In this connexion see the discussion under Marriage in Chapter 11).

Naming has been discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. It should be noted that the Kugu-Nganychara distinguish between the three categories of names reported by Thomson for the Archer River (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the "navel name" is again determined by manipulating the umbilical cord. In this connexion it should be noted that I have already argued that what is involved in the establishment of a special relationship rather than the allocation of an actual name. This runs counter to the Arther River reports. The Kugu-Nganychara may also differ to the degree that MB is the designated kin-type, and that only the names of men are called. On the Archer River, the bias is more towards male agnates (especially F, FB); and women's as well as men's names may be called. These may represent regional variations.

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1 Evidence on both issues is very scanty and requires confirmatory research.

McConnel (1934:319) claims that:

> According to Wik-natanya and Wik-nantyara and I think also Wik-munkan custom, a child may not receive its father's name during his lifetime.

(If true for the Wik-Mungkana, this comment is oddly contradictory of McConnel's treatment of "navel names" as reported in Chapter 5). McConnel does not specify the status of the names to which she refers. However, I have obtained no evidence to support her comment. Indeed, all males within a single patrilineage customarily share the same "big names"; and, in discussing personal names, informants usually describe names as "coming from father" (in the case of males; in the case of females, names "come from auntie", i.e., FZ).

There is some variability in the assignation of "small names" (see for example, the discussion of naming earlier in the chapter). However, there is not, to my knowledge, any injunction against the transmission of a man's name to his son. McConnel is correct, as we have already observed (see the discussion of naming referred to above), in noting that names (in this case, "small names") are ranked hierarchically. She refers (1934:320) to a "method" which "tends to ensure that clan names derived from the most important totems are handed down in order of precedence, the most significant names being preserved and lesser ones in order of importance". Her comment (p.320) that 'The eldest child of the eldest child receives the "big name" of the clan...' is misleading; "big names" are not as directly related to questions of precedence as she appears to think. (I have

already noted in Chapter 5 her failure to distinguish between "big names" and "little names".) However, she is right to stress the notion of structural seniority, although, as we have observed, the rules may be bent.

During my years of contact with the Kugu-Nganychara there have been no opportunities for observing the events surrounding birth. It appears that if they ever existed among the Kugu-Nganychara, the ceremonial presentations to father and to the nhampa kurin ("navel name") have fallen into total disuse. Consequently, I am unable to add to McConnel's and Thomson's accounts of these activities.

Spirit conception - agu kunyjim/pukpe nhepe:

In answer to my queries, it was indicated, firstly, that the spirit component of children came from "home", i.e., from father's country or agu kunyji. However, my informant (P.A.) added that though it was proper for the spirit to come from "father's side", it could also come from "mother's side". How then do the Kugu-Nganychara determine which "side" the child's spirit has come from? The answer is simply that it is judged by the infant's appearance:

> If the little one looks like mother or uncle (MB) then we say that the baby "follows" mother, uncle, grandfather from that country (i.e., MF). We say, "Awu thawa nhingadhem nhiina, Must come from mother's story" (literally, story-place - woman - mother - from - stays, sits).

> When we look at other people we say, "No different (from their father)". Then we know they must come from their father's story.
>
> My own family? Well, one way, they come from father's story. My wife's brother's family? Well, those two big girls, they follow their father. You look (for yourself); they have solid bodies.

As indicated in this passage, the spirit - pukpe nhepe[1] (nhepe - breath) or pukpe awum (pukpe - baby, awu - "story place", -M - ABL) - comes from a "story-place" or awu. It need not be any particular awu, i.e. the spirits need not come from special pukpe-awu or "baby story places". The spirit enters the mother in the following ways:

1. It can be directed towards the future mother by a deceased agnate of the future father. The spirit of the deceased person (ngangka thanhthe) must issue instructions when it encounters a "baby spirit" (pukpe ngangka nhepe). Then the "baby spirit" will travel about until it finds the right woman;

2. Similarly, a deceased member of the mother's patrilineage may direct a "baby spirit" from an awu within his or her own estate;

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1. This term is also used for bêche-de-mer. It is tempting to suggest that a resemblance is seen between the latter and the child in foetal form.

3. A third procedure was described in the following terms:

> If a man is out hunting he may pass a "story place" and perhaps "frighten" the fish (nga'a) or animal (minha) or plant (mayi) at that story place. Afterwards, he may spear or eat the animal or plant he has "frightened". The spirit - ngangka thanhthe/pukpe nhepe/pukpe ngangka thanhthe - will enter the body of the father and (then) enter the mother.

In the case of vegetable foods, even if they are dug by the mother (e.g., in the case of yams) it is the ingestion by the father which is considered important, at least initially.

A person's physique serves as a guide to the awu from which he or she is supposed to have come. People on the Kendall River are noted for being extremely tall and thin. They are frequently said to have "come from yomen-awu" (yomen - yamstick). This is not to say that the resemblance goes beyond a generalised relationship between person and awu. Informants baulk at suggestions that if, for example, a baby's spirit derives from nga'a toho-toh-awu (barramundi "story place"), then the baby should resemble a barramundi. One very emphatic response was: "No, they can't. They look like people, nothing like fish."

The implication is that there is no relationship, as such, between pukpe nhepe and the item represented by the awu. The remarks directed at Kendall River people about their resemblance to yamsticks are joking or derisory rather than profound statements about the nature of the universe. The spirits of babies are supposed to roam about in the same way as other spirits and living people. As one informant

put it, "They travel about using that country just like a grown man." If the characteristics of awu can be taken on by spirits or people, then the latter can be expected to take on the characteristics attributed to the estate as a whole, and not just of one location which happens to occur within it. The spirits are said to reside at the awu; they are not of the awu. If they can transform themselves into the fish or animal or plant which the awu represents, that process is reminiscent of the transformation of living people into their kam waya when under threat.

4. Another mechanism is described in the following terms:

> There is another law. Before we used to use a baler shell for drinking. If a sister has a child, then it must be that her brothers are using the same shell. Everyone is using the same drinking water. The baby will acquire the same manner of walking, the same physique, the same footprints as its uncles - all from using the one shell for drinking water.

The conceptual distinction between transmitted characteristics (transmitted in a genetic sense) and acquired characteristics (acquired from the social environment in which the child is raised) appears to be clearly drawn. For example, a child may have the physical appearance of its father, but the mannerisms of its mother's brother. It is not certain that this mechanism involves the spirit or ngangka thanhthe of the child, so much as its actual physical substance. It would be tempting to link ngangka thanhthe with the "genetic" (transmitted from F and from F's country) and the unborn foetus with the "behavioural". However, it is almost certain that this would not adequately reflect Kugu-Nganychara ideology. The two are separate in a sense, but feed back, one into the other.

Pukpe awu - "baby story-place":

I have already noted that the spirits derive from any awu, not from special baby awu. However, the latter - pukpe awu - do exist, one in estate X1, another in estate KN2. If a couple is childless, it is said that they can approach a man from either "country" to activate the awu on their behalf. The "Boss-man" will clean the awu and call out "Oh...send more babies...".

In X1, the baby "story-place" consists of a large tree (yuku cheewa, source of string used in spear-making) which stands alongside a large mound. To "frighten" the awu, the tree is chopped with a tomahawk. The tree has a "good side" and a "bad side":

> If people are "sulky (yiiwama) they will chop the bad side and call out, "Oh, let mothers carry weak and sickly children." If the boss strikes the right side of the tree, he will call out for good, healthy babies:
>
> Uuw....pukpe wanhthi kaladha.[1]

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1. Special restrictions govern behaviour near this awu. Only people who are members of the estate are permitted to eat yams dug near it. Moreover, the yams must be dug out slowly and carefully, and the holes dug must be filled. If others, i.e., "outside people", eat the yams they will become ill with "cold sick". If the holes are left open, i.e., remain unfilled, people will cough worse and worse, and may eventually die. No restrictions govern the killing or eating or minha as opposed to mayi from near the awu.

(2) Betrothal and marriage.

There are no significant differences in the rituals associated with betrothal and marriage between the Archer River and the Kugu-Nganychara regions. (See McConnel 1940:438-9) for a description of betrothal by a man who belongs to the "Freshwater crocodile"/Wik-Iiyanh corporation.)

(3) Initiation ceremonies / rites de passage.

The Kugu-Nganychara region has at least four major ceremonies: pucha, north of the "Thuuk River" and centred on the lower Kendall River; and wanam, kunalam/anychalam, and munka, all south of the "Thuuk River". I deal with wanam in some detail, as it is the most vigorous of the ceremonies; moreover, as indicated in Chapter 7, it is often used as a label ("wanam mob") for those people (or most of them) whom I here refer to otherwise as the Kugu-Nganychara. The other ceremonies are dealt with in short summaries.

(a) Wanam:

Location and leadership: The wanam ceremony is centred on thaha-kungadha (wanam-awu) at the mouth of the "Holroyd River"; officially it comes under the control of the kugu-thu'a ("Long spear")/ Kugu-Ugbanh corporation (H2), which owned the estate in which the site is located. This corporation has now died out. People are still apt to say that "wanam is owned by Ugbanh". For two generations, and now moving into the third generation, it has come under the effective leadership of the senior men of the following estates: kugu-pooli ("Carpet snake")/Kugu-Mu'inh (H3) and kugu-yome ("Possum")/Kugu-Mu'inh (X5). Other prominent men, viz., the two principal singers, come from

estates kugu-uthu ("Dead body")/Iiyanh (HU1) and kugu-yome ("Possum")/Kugu-Mu'inh (X6) respectively. (It should be noted, in this connexion, that there are two song traditions, one, the northern or "Holroyd" tradition, and the other, the southern or "Christmas Creek" tradition. They vary in certain stylistic features, and, in the case of one or two songs, the actual words sung. The variations do not inhibit the two principal singers singing together).

Creation story: The creation of the wanam ceremony is probably the best known and the most frequently told story in the Kugu-Nganychara region. Both men and women know and tell the story. Informants tend to focus on different details, sometimes concentrating on events in their own estate to the exclusion of happenings which occurred in more remote parts. The following version draws on a number of accounts:

> The story involves the travels and activities of two men known variously as the kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers or the wanam men. They started somewhere in the north, reportedly in the region of the Love River. They carried boomerangs and shields, as well as the other items (woomera, spears, etc.) normally carried by men. In some versions they carried, in addition, some heavy ironwood objects. They camped at oynych.lat.n (in Wik-Ngathana territory) with a large group of people; then they left by themselves, travelling southwards and more towards the coast.
>
> Just north of the "Holroyd" they dropped an ironwood fork on the saltpan (at kekendan). Near kobe they encountered a goup of people fishing. The brothers joined them, but were annoyed at only catching "nail-fish". They stole the fish the others had caught, and ran off with them attached to special sticks (Ug. koyebuthangi) or Mu. nga'a wuntu. A catfish (nga'a kumadha) fell off on the saltpan, creating a "story-place" (nga'a-kumadha-awu). Between kobe and the coast they found an ironwood tree, from which they cut a woomera. They sang a song in Ugbanh to commemorate the event. As one man explained:
>
> > The two men were walking around, to the west to the east, to north, to south, looking for good places to camp. And when they found a good place

to camp they made song and dance there. Shark, catfish, different, different minha, wallabies... Teaching young men. Two men singing there and teaching young followers. (P.A.)

They continued south, singing all the way down to the Mitchell River:

... but there were too many mosquitoes at Mitchell River where they camped, just north of Wallaby Island at muchinyji. The two men decided to travel back to the Holroyd where there were good camping places and no mosquitoes. They said, "We must go back to thaha-kungadha and finish our dance off there".

And leaving the Mitchell, they came north, through where the people speak Thaanha'an, singing, singing all the way, up to the south side of the Chapman. Here they started talking in Thaayorre - past the moon story and on to the river. They were still carrying this big bundle of fish about on a hook or a big stick... They had all sorts of fish - catfish, barramundi, butterfish and jewfish. By this time they were rotten and stinking, so they decided to leave them there. When they dropped the rotten fish into the river they came alive again, and they called out, "The fish are rotten but still alive". They chased them everywhere in the water and got half of them back, but the other half escaped. (P.A./Mu'inh).

They continued northwards, "throwing boomerangs all the way. They travelled one behind the other, throwing boomerangs, picking them up and throwing them again..." (Y.Ng./Uwanh). In this manner they proceeded to Christmas Creek:

On the north side of waalang the two singing men saw duck's feathers, so they decided to sit down at night to spear the ducks in the swamp. They smeared themselves with mud so the ducks couldn't smell them, but there were no ducks there. They left a song at that place which people still sing when they smear themselves with mud. The words go "No luck, no minya". (P.A./Mu'inh).

From there they continued north, and located some large yams in a patch of scrub. The yams were so large that the brother digging called to the other brother for assistance. It was impossible to get them out of the ground without breaking them. This event, too, became the subject of a song.

They continued northwards, throwing their boomerangs and creating the saltpans. They made songs about the taipan, and left waterlilies at kaytyana, north of the "Holroyd" which they crossed without observing. They left ironwood forks at a number of sites: madhekan, nga'awu, yenge.

From yenge they travelled south-east and sang a song. From there they travelled south, still in my country (T2), and still throwing the boomerangs... There somewhere west, on the beach, they saw some oyster catchers (minha kunalu). (In some versions the birds are nightcurlews). (Y.Ng./Uwanh)

The two brothers were annoyed at crossing the river unintentionally. It was now night-time, and they hoped to reach thaha-kungadha which was now to the south of them. The disturbed "mother bird" circled about their heads. Its continuous calling was enough to "get them crazy" and "cranky from that bird." This inspired a new song.

Further south along the beach, they frightened some crows from a Casuarina. The calling of the birds annoyed them further; and they made another song (basically in Thaayorre).

Finally they arrived at the dance ground, agu thupi, the large mound where one of the dances - the string dance - is performed. They were still dragging the fish which this dance commemorates. There the two men performed their last song and dance, the "devil dance" (ngangka thanhthe - spirit of the deceased). According to some versions they then disappeared to the west, out to sea, leaving three islands behind them.

In a version given in Pakanh at Edward River, my informant stressed that only "half the story belongs to the Holroyd"; in the south it is associated with the kugu-pangku ("Wallaby")/Thaayorre estate corporation, located just south of the Chapman River. A number of men affiliated with this estate are noted singers of the

wanam songs. However, they do not participate in the ceremony based at thaha-kungadha; they have, in the words of my informant, "same words, different actions", i.e., the same songs but different dances.

Recruitment: Participants are drawn from the "Thuuk", "Holroyd" and "Christmas Creek" zones. The "Thuuk River" from which the kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers retraced their steps back to thaha-kungadha marks a definite northern boundary, thereby excluding the Kendall River people. The latter did participate from time to time, though their involvement was always considered somewhat marginal. Some were "new men" in the ceremony, even in middle age. Men south of Moonkan Creek rarely attended, and then only as observers after they had attained senior status in their own area. A pidhal.m song created by a man from HU1 ("Dead body") pokes fun at the affectations of the coastal people:

> You beach people think you are pretty flash dancers...
> Here I am sitting down under the bloodwood trees;
> I don't think you are up to much.

This little song not only expresses the coast-inland dichotomy in an unmistakable manner, but indicates the "outsider" status of the inlanders in general with respect to the ceremony. They are marginal in a conceptual sense if not in fact; inlanders from both the "Holroyd" and "Christmas Creek" participated freely in the ceremony. Indeed, some "bloodwood people, both living and dead, are celebrated for their singing or dancing.

Periodicity: Available evidence suggests that ceremonies were held infrequently, perhaps as many as ten years apart.

Timing: Informants claim that the ceremony lasted upwards of two months. The favoured period for holding the ceremony was in the early dry season, during oynch.n ngaka thangku, i.e., about May.

Economic base: The resource base and the allocation of different sectors of the landscape to the three major ritual groupings - men, women and children, and initiates - has been discussed already in Chapter 8. A point worth adding is that the production of the two male groupings is consumed within each grouping. Only food gathered by the women crosses the ritual divisions.

Structure of the ceremony: Each of the ritual groupings has its own "shade area". The initiates (pukpe puugam; pukpe - baby, puugam) remain in their own shade area at the south of the general camping area. Early each morning, before daybreak, they go out hunting. They must not be observed by the women. They hunt in the company of certain men who have passed through the ceremony before (pama engkatha; engka - rib, - dha - HAVING). The initiates are referred to as "dead dogs" (ku'a uthu).

Each afternoon the initiates are led into the senior men's camp (pama manu thayan - senior men; manu - neck, thayan - strong) by the men of the first degree (pama engkatha). There they are instructed in two dances (the frilled-necked lizard (minha poynychath, minha thunhtha) and 'ironwood slab' (yuku awum; yuku - thing, awu - "story" "story-place", -M - ABL.). The latter is buried permanently at the circular dance ground where both dances are performed; it is revealed only during the ceremony.

On the "final day", everyone has assembled at thaha-kungadha. The first dance is performed early in the morning. All fires have been extinguished except in the two men's camps. A senior man presents fire to a baby girl who stands in front of her mother. The women then depart, taking the child and the fire with them. The latter is used to rekindle the fires back in the main camp.

The men then perform three major dances in privacy away from the women: ngangka thanhthe (the spirits of the dead kaha-(k)ungk.n men travel about weakly), the boomerang dance (the two kaha-(k)ungk.n men throw and fight with boomerangs), and the shark dance (a fisherman - one of the brothers - catches sharks with a rod and line). The initiates have never observed or participated in these dances before.

From there, the men move to the next part of the ceremony. Mothers of the initiates, under the supervision of older women, take up position at a special site to the east of the main camp. Other female kin and children watch from the peripheries as the mothers, lay on the ground; to conceal them from their sons, they are covered with blankets (traditionally, with sheets of tea-tree bark or branches). The men circle the women. The initiate (pama muyu - junior cross-cousin, i.e., FZ-S, MB-S (real or classificatory)) holds a senior cross-cousin (pama munhth, FZ+S, MB+S (real or classificatory)), one by each hand. Together they jump over the initiate's "really mother" (genetrix), and back again. The initiates run down to the river where they wash in the salty water, removing the charcoal with which they have hitherto been rubbed. They are now "new men" (pama pugadha). They then return to the thick scrub which marks their shade area. The senior men retire to

the dance ground where the 'ironwood slab' (yuku awum) is buried; and the women go off to dig and to prepare yams (especially the "hairy yam", Dioscorea sativa) and other root stocks for a final "feast".

In the cool part of the afternoon the men prepare for the next sequence of dances: the stingray dance (which is performed on its own special area) and the wallaby dance (also with its own special dance ground). Then everyone rests and waits for the evening.

When evening comes all the men proceed to the main camp sited near the large oval mound referred to in the kaha-(k)ungk.n story. Men and women both join in performances of the string dance (representing the fish on the strings carried by the two brothers).

Lifting of restrictions: Even after the charcoal has been washed off, the initiates are subject to restrictions which have applied since the beginning of the ceremony:

> After wash, (the initiates are) still living one side from families. Pama kempa ngaynch (kempa - body, ngaynych - "poison", restricted). Can't talk straight, father and mother family. After two days (he can talk) mother, sister, children. He can talk any man from start, finished off dance, finished off charcoal (P.A.)

In other words, restrictions continue to apply to close cognates for two days after the completion of the ceremony, except for adult males. Restrictions which formerly applied are lifted on the "final day".

Other features: The wanam ceremony has its own distinctive body paint designs. However, these designs only employ white clay and red ochre, as do other ceremonies in the Kugu-Nganychara region. The other ornamentation, including feather head-dresses, nautilus shell headbands, pearl-shell pendants, pandanus armbands, etc., are also shared in common with other Kugu-Nganychara ceremonies. The singing

exhibits a number of features, including the calls which terminate each refrain, and the characteristic double clap which follows each call, which serve to distinguish wanam from other styles, e.g., kunalam and munka. While boomerangs do accompany the latter, they are most clearly identified with the wanam ceremony (see, especially, the creation story). They are not used as a percussion instrument north of the wanam ceremony (i.e., this feature above, separates wanam from pucha; see below). In addition, the singers characteristically beat the boomerangs together in parallel (i.e., they are struck together along their entire length), with the ends projecting away from the body. While they are used in both munka and kunalam (and other "Holroyd" - "Christmas Creek" song forms) in a similar way, these features serve to distinguish wanam (and these other "styles") from singing south of Moonkan Creek, even that body of it which relates to the wanam tradition (i.e., to the travels of the two brothers). There, singers characteristically beat the boomerangs across each other rather than in parallel, i.e., the ends of one boomerang project towards the singer, and the ends of the other project away.

There are several general comments which should be made. The most important, in terms of the general argument, is that there is no apparent relationship between the ceremony and 'totemic organization'. There was a suggestion made during a session when I attempted to determine the meaning of the term kaha-(k)ungk.n that it was a "big name", and that the two brothers were "like kam waya" to the kugu-thu'a ("Long spear")/Ugbanh corporation. It was thought that the name might be associated with the "diamond stingray". However, although it is possible to find a number of phenomena which are the subjects of

particular wanam songs and dances - e.g. barramundi, yams, sharks, crows, wallabies, etc. -, which are also kam waya of particular corporations, it is not under this last aspect that they are perceived. For example, there is no sense that "Barramundi" men own or stand in a special relationship to the barramundi song; or that "Freshwater shark" men have a particular proprietory interest in the shark dance. Moreover, although the kaha-(k)ungk.n men are deemed to have "left" the awu commemorated in the songs and dances of the ceremony, the men who control the estates in which the awu are located are not assigned any special function in their performance, either as singers or as dancers. Strictly speaking, this does not cover the case of the men who formerly owned the ceremonial ground itself; nor should the above statements be taken to mean that men associated with particular awu do not take a special interest in the dances or songs which are linked with those awu. I have unequivocal evidence that certain individuals have attempted to sponsor songs and dances which relate to their estate. However, this does not mean that their prominence within the ceremony means that those promoting them will gain prominence as the "lead singer" or the "lead dancer" (both culturally-acknowledged rôles). Rather the relationship operates in the other direction; an individual who is prominent within the ceremony is in a position to promote those elements of it most closely identified with him (see the discussion under "Field bosses" in the next chapter).

This discussion highlights another issue, viz., the differential status of participants. Although these are formal age-grades, or better, ritual-grades, there is no mechanical progression from one to the other simply as a function of advancing age, or the number of ceremonies in which one has participated. Both these factors are

involved; however, one's personal status in ordinary day-to-day life, and the displaying of one's personal capacities within the ceremony itself are also important considerations. Particularly talented or forceful individuals are singled out to advance through stages denied to others. Not all men achieve the status or pama kathawawa ("big men"), although all men, apart from those considered "silly fellas" (those who combine dullness of intellect with physical clumsiness and a lack of social skills), can expect to become pama manu thayan (senior men, or men of the second ceremonial degree; i.e., "old men"). Those selected out to become men of pre-eminent status undergo special training and ordeals additional to those normally endured. The latter include limitations on the amount of food and water consumed, separation from the women, "sitting quietly", restrictions on talking to certain close kin and on scratching oneself, obligatory hunting, eating faeces, etc., concealed in food (perhaps threatened more than practiced), compulsory instruction in dances and public or semi-public performances (at an age when youths in the society exhibit an almost pathological shyness), an exaggeratedly low status (labelled "dead dogs"; no ornamentation; charcoal-covered); and forced to enter the water while the senior men "call up" their crocodiles (see McConnel 1957:10-11, for a discussion of "making" crocodiles). Their social universe is turned topsy-turvy by sudden and obligatory shifts in behaviour, the removal of the support of close kin, and by participation in events the structure of which is unknown to them. Moreover, for the first time in their lives, major limitations are imposed on their personal freedom. Potential pama kathawawa are tested by apparently gratuitous requirements, e.g., sitting cross-legged for two weeks with the index fingers of each hand interlocked, thus unable to feed or to scratch themselves. In

the end it is they who become the "big men", drawn out from the pack of the simply "old men".

Another point worth making is that the ceremony permits a high degree of individualization. If the ceremony does not go to any lengths to mark the links between particular songs and dances and particular men in terms of kam waya and awu, it is nevertheless true that certain individuals become identified with particular dances or particular rôles in dances, simply because they are expert performers or show innovative flair. (Examples of innovations brought into the ceremony will be given in the next chapter.)

To sum up some of the major points:

(i) The wanam ceremony is site-specific (and season specific). This is reflected not only in the organization of economic life, but in the performance of the actual dances which rely on a complex of ready-made dance grounds, concealed objects, trees used as props, mounds, etc., as well as the structure provided by the spacing of the grounds themselves.

(ii) The ceremony is site-specific in another sense. Wanam is not a composite ceremony where each so-called "clan" "brings in" its own dances (cf. winychinama discussed below, or apalacha further north); rather the structure is ordained "from start", i.e., it follows the format established by the two brothers. The format itself is inextricably linked with the site. It is a local ceremony at which others participate. The local corporation provides the titular "boss", and constitutes the official "owner". However, a combination of factors, both demographic and political, have conspired to shift real

authority elsewhere. All corporations run the risk of extinction suffered by this group; moreover, the advantages of playing host may always be balanced, or even outweighed, by the loss of political autonomy in the face of the personal ambitions of "outsiders". The suggestion I wish to make is that political life among the Kugu-Nganychara is not adequately characterized as the mechanical operation of a set of rules and normative procedures, or, at another level, as a situation of stasis or equilibrium produced by exclusive and equally-balanced equivalent units (which, taking the orthodox view, would consist of clans). Were this true, we would have to account for two things: firstly, the lack of local ceremonies for each of the "clans" (or, at least, the lack of a 'composite ceremony' as outlined above); and secondly, the emergence of "big men". The two issues are joined in the following question: Why should particular ceremonies be focused on particular sites? I return to this question in the next chapter.

(iii) The ceremony provides an opportunity for the exhibition of individual talents; moreover, it allows the people drawn from a relatively-restricted geographical region to express their "oneness". With respect to the latter point, it may be noted that it still serves as the major symbol of regional solidarity at Aurukun for the Kugu-Nganychara (excluding those affiliated with pucha), and to a slightly lesser degree at Edward River.[1]

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1. The reasons underlying these different emphases relate to the social affiliations and personal preferences of the ceremonial leaders in each of the two settlements. They also relate to the human resources available to the leaders.

(iv) The ceremony is male-oriented. Women play a supportive rôle, and, although important behind the scenes, even politically, they cannot be said to occupy a politically-central position in the ceremony. This reflects the normal, day-to-day state of affairs. The women know most of the songs; and nowadays will often sing at public performances (in the settlement context) when the men lost their voices or are "short-wind". There are no exclusively women's dances, though women will dance alongside the men, and nowadays perform singly or in pairs, etc., during the "warm-up" singing, i.e., before the main dancing begins.

I propose treating the other ceremonies largely in note form.

(b) Kunalam:

Otherwise known as anychalam (in avoidance language). Centred on yangku, in estate X2. Titular owners: Kugu-minha ("Diver")/Kugu-Mangk (X2).

Creation story: The story is not well known. Its major elements are as follows:

> The central character is the "sea-turtle" (minha kaha-mije; Uw, Ug. minha loorum; Mm. minha 'oko; Iy. minha punyche). In some versions the "sea-turtle" is accompanied by a "swamp-turtle"/freshwater tortoise). The first location normally referred to is ikalath, a site located on the coast just north of the Archer River mouth. One of them is said to have composed ("made") a song about the cliff which rises behind the beach at the northern end of ikalath.[1] The song also described the two men as handsome (pama thenyche);

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1. North of ikalath the red bauxitic cliffs are a distinctive feature of the coastline; they occur as far north as Boyd Point, near the entrance to Albatross Bay. The reference is ikalath or to "Red Cliff" (known by that name even in Edward River versions of the story) may be construed simply as a shorthand way of referring to the whole stretch of coastline; or a convenient way of referring to some location within the general area, of which ikalath serves as the southern boundary. It is not conceived of as the southern limit of

however, they were in fact hunchbacked (pama wumpu, "humpy-backed men").

From ikalath they travelled south along the coast to wabidi, at the northern mouth of the Archer River.[2] From there they crossed the water to Wallaby Island, in the south of the river; and from there they crossed the yaan.ng, at the southern mouth of the river. Then they proceeded inland through poyche-nhiin to taprang, a swamp renowned for its much-vaunted bamboo used in spear-making. There they sang about bamboo spears, keka pinda (pinda - bamboo).

They rested at "Big Bamboo" before crossing the Love River at po'al, and continued on to agu yaangen; then to mayi panten; and to wochaman-awu, near waatha-nhiina. All this time they were men, not animals.

At mandeld-nhiin, near munpun, they made a hollow as if they were about to hold a dance. Just north of munpun, at maan-mangk, they saw a shooting star. One of them was so frightened (at this presage of death) that he ran into the water, despite the attempts of the other man to restrain him. There he turned into a turtle (kaha-mije nhingadhe - "mother turtle"). When he came out of the water he turned into a man again (though some people say he laid eggs there).

In the swamp at munpun one of them noted the special grass in which the Magpie geese lay their eggs. They made songs about the grass, and about wet season shelters constructed at piirith (near waatha-nhiina). From there, people say they must have travelled straight on south, because there are no songs on the Kendall, "Thuuk", or "Holroyd" Rivers. The only other songs are at yangku, the ceremonial centre (otherwise known as kunalam-awu or kaha-mije-awu). It is there, people say, that they must have decided to teach everyone the songs and dances. It was a good place to stay.

In another version the men pass yangku on the trip south and doubled back from the north bank of the Chapman River, returning to yangku.

Recruitment: Similar to wanam, but more biased towards the south. There are reports of men from south of Moonkan Creek participating; in the context in which the reports were given, their participation was obviously considered somewhat unusual. I have no recorded cases of Kendall River men attending the ceremony.

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1. (Cont.) the story, certainly not nowadays. Some Kugu-Nganychara man have had experience on pearling luggers and trochus boats, taking them as far afield as the Papua coast. It is currently suggested, no doubt on the basis of this experience that the "Turtle" must have come from the Torres Strait, more particularly, "Turtle Island" (possibly Turtle Head Island off the mouth of the Escape River).

2. One informant said they must have "made" a song there. A reference to agu withinh in one of the songs is taken as perhaps referring to wabidi.

Periodicity, timing: Details unkown; apparently similar to wanam.

Economic base: Yangku is a focal campsite; it has an abundant supply of freshwater. Access to marine resources; extensive coastal dune system with 'dune woodland' plant communities. No information suggesting a division of the landscape parallelling the tripartite division made during the wanam ceremony.

Structure of the ceremony: Overall structure unknown. Dances performed: spear dance; mayi pinki ("fruit of white mangrove") or dilly-bag dance; woomera; "crippled man" dance; and "mother turtle" (or ngangka thanhthe, the turtle spirit). The last is described as the "finish-off dance". Frilled-necked lizard dance is borrowed from wanam; no dances borrowed from munka. All dances are "open", i.e., there are no secret dances (cf. wanam). All dances apart from "crippled man" are solos (including Frilled-neck lizard). "Crippled man" involves three dancers, with one central figure. Dances relate to different sections of the topography at yangku (e.g., progression from beach to freshwater lagoon). Multiple degrees of initiation.

Other features: Distinctive singing and clapping; distinctive call at end of songs (nga-woy).

Other comments: Like wanam, there is no obvious relationship between the kunalam ceremony and 'totemic organization', e.g., turtle is not listed as kam waya for estate X2. Moreover, in the case of kunalam, the awu linked with the songs and dances are, with the exception of the ceremonial ground itself, located outside the Kugu-Nganychara region, and, in fact, well north of the Kendall River.

The man who is "boss" of yangku is also the "boss" of kunalam, but in name only. Everyone told me that it belongs to "B.T.'s family" (specifying the name of the senior male member of X2). However, while interviewing a "Holroyd" man (from HU1) about a ceremony in which he himself participated, the following discussion took place:

JvS: Who in charge of anychalam?

P.M.: All munka - side (i.e., estate X1). Grandfather to J.C., his FF, in charge/ from estate X1; and G.L.'s father (also from estate X1).

That same time Old H. (Thaayorre; "boss" of winychinam at Edward River; estate lies north of Chapman River, cf. creation story) brought gang from Edward River; big mob (Thaayorre) ... and Kugu-Mangk too ... P.M. mob (mentioning the name of the senior male of estate B1 - "Barramundi"/ Kugu-Mangk).

B.T.'s father (i.e., the father of the current "boss" of yangku) still living then. He could have been boss man if he

> could have sung or danced. Could dance a little bit ... but a bit silly (in the head).
>
> Different to Old J. (mentioning another man classed as "silly" living at Aurukun), not as bad. No trouble walking or talking. Bit slow; slow thinking. Sometime when playing joke take up wrong way, like Old J. at Edward River; sometime take joke O.K.
>
> Company bora, but B.T. should be in charge.

Unfortunately, B.T., like his father before him, did not have the requisite qualities to take on the real responsibility for the ceremony even in recent times. He, too, was regarded as a "bit silly". Nevertheless, he was always in the thick of things when dances from the ceremony were performed at Edward River. Moreover, I witnessed, on several occasions, attempts by the "big bosses" to instruct the old man's senior son so he could "take over". The dance chosen was the "spirit" dance. This dance most closely identifies the dancer with the creator "Turtle man/mother"; and in rehearsals and at public performances a turtle was painted on his back. The dancer crawls along leaving a turtle's track behind him. Sometimes the father would crawl alongside his son though the dance is in fact a solo performance.

(c) Munka:

Sometimes known as munka-kuuwa. Centred on mutha-awula, near piching, the focal site of estate X1. Men from this estate "own" the ceremony.

Creation story: There are two stories linked with this ceremony. One involves "Diver" (Cormorant) who is believed to have travelled from the Mitchell River, leaving islands where he bobbed up from the sea. Details are scarce. Two "Diver" men are also linked with a site on the coast just south of "Christmas Creek" (manu-pachinga); they attempted to hold a munka ceremony there, but the intended participants continued on southwards and attended another munka ceremony at peena (south of Chapman River). At manu pachinga the circular dance ground (similar to that located at peena) is still visible.

The other tradition relates to the travels of two munka men who came from the north for a ceremony at kuntuman, inland from me'a-awu. They had a fight at anbadha. The cause is given variously as the eating of the old man's dog by the younger brother, thus giving the name munka ku'a thagi (ku'a thagi - "dog hungry") to the ceremony; and the eating of a shovel-nosed ray by the younger brother. They agreed to part, the older brother returning north with apalacha, characterized by the

distinctive final call: ko (multiple in apalacha, single in pucha), the younger brother continuing south with munka, characterized by the distinctive final call, ɛ̃:, ɛ̃:. It is said by men from the Kugu-Nganychara region that if the fight had not occurred apalacha would not now exist; conversely, apalacha men from the Kirke River-Cape Keerweer region state that the two men were in fact apalacha men and that, if they had not fought, there would be no munka and/or wanam. (The northerners are apt to confuse the two ceremonies.) It is important to note that the fight fairly much marks the point of demarcation between wanam-munka-kunalam (south of the "Thuuk River") and pucha-apalacha (north of the river) (see pucha, below).

The two traditions are sometimes linked. In one version two men from peena are also invited to kuntuman. During the ceremony they invite everyone to peena for a munka ceremony, including the two "Diver" men. They create the dance ground at agu manu-pachi(nga); but nobody stops with them. Instead, they continue straight on to peena.

Periodicity, timing: Details unknown; apparently similar to wanam.

Economic base: Mutha-awula is associated with piching which constitutes a focal site. Abundant fresh water; extensive coastal dune system with 'dune woodland' plant communities. Rich in rootstocks. Strong division between "young men" who hunt and gather yams inland, and "old men" who hunt and dig yams along the coast. In discussions K.Ng. men themselves pointed to the parallelism with wanam. (For women, see below).

Structure of the ceremony: A striking feature of this ceremony is the rigorous separation of the men from women and children. Women are obliged to camp at a considerable distance from the ceremony. They only "come in for the final day", i.e., the culminating point of the ceremony. Munka is regarded as the most "dangerous" of the ceremonies. Until recent years when some of the dances were "opened" at Edward River, and later at Aurukun, women had never seen any of the dances. Dances include the Dotterel dance (minha thuchi kanggun), dog dance, and ngangka thanhthe (spirit) or pama uthu ("dead body") dance.

Initiates are to refrain from laughing or smiling at the antics of the "old men" during a number of 'free-form' dances. The dog dance records a vision witnessed by a current member of estate X1 (involving a white wallaby who turns the tables on a hunting dog). The major ordeal for initiates is to sustain the heat of large fires lit every evening. Part of the duties of the initiates is to collect the timber for the fires, "like punishment." They are also enjoined to remain silent.

Initiates are restricted from approaching and talking to F,B, and MB, but "talk straight to brother-in-law", i.e., male cross-cousins (whom they normally avoid). Restrictions are most severe in the case of actual F. Male cross-cousins attend them during the ceremony and attempt to shield them from the heat of the fires, which are made by B, MB.

During the ceremony, and in secret, the "old men" manufacture numbers of multi-pronged spears (keka aynychan) as gifts for the initiates on the "final day". Correspondingly, Z, FZ and M (actual) make dilly-bags (aychari or wangga).

Other features: The ceremony involves an elaborate presentation of the initiates to the women. Informants always talk about the multiple poles planted in the dance-ground. This feature distinguishes munka from the other major ceremonies. There are no solo dances, though these are principle roles in the "devil" or spirit dance, and the dog dance. Extensive group dancing. Bullroarers used.

General remarks: There is no obvious relationship between the ceremony and 'totemic organization'. Moreover, despite the importance of the ceremony and the great secrecy which surrounds much of it, it is not supported by an elaborate mytho-historical base. There is a higher coincidence between titular and actual leadership within this ceremony. Moreover, one of the dances (the dog dance) is closely identified with one of the members of the estate corporation which controls the ceremonial site. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the father of this man died before he could transmit his knowledge to his sons; and the vision is clearly a mechanism allowing part of that knowledge to be re-created. Moreover, the most knowledgeable man belongs to estate X6 ("Possum"). In any performance of the ceremony nowadays he would take the principal role; and it was he who was responsible for the holding of an abbreviated version of the ceremony in Edward River several years ago. It was then that some of the dances were "opened" or put on public display for the first time.

(d) Paynycha pinpan.m or paynycha kor'am ("Brolga"):

A set of songs and dances centred on agu manu-umu in estate X5. The songs and dances concern the travels of a "Brolga man". No relationship with totemic organization. Little ceremonial status in late 1960s, but undergoing a revival in 1970s under sponsorship of its "boss" (senior male of estate X5). Site-specific.

Stylistically related (by informants) to wanam-kunalam-munka. Described as "still wanam", i.e., it recruits from the same area, though, like kunalam and munka, there is a bias to the southern part of the Kugu-Nganychara region. Distinctive body-paint designs; final call (kor, kor, kor, kor, i.e., the brolga call).

(e) Pilam:

Ceremony centred on agu ithang on the south side of Moonkan Creek (manRupa), in estate ED1 ("Duck/Thaayorre). "Bosses": "company bora" for both ED1 and B1, which between them control the lower Moonkan Creek. Involves the travels of the Saltwater crocodile (see McConnel 1957:99-102 for versions of related stories). Dancing seen as of the wanam style. Although it lies outside the Kugu-Nganychara area, pilam no doubt drew participants from the region, especially from "Christmas Creek". Has fallen into apparent desuetude.

This exhausts the range of ceremonies, and songs and dances, classified by the Kugu-Nganychara as of the wanam-type. They are all coastal; site-specific; bear little, if any, relationship to 'totemic organization'; imply no special bond between songs/dances and the men who "own" or control the estates in which the awu linked with the songs are located; and are local in character, i.e., they come under the titular leadership of the senior male of the corporation which controls the estate in which the ceremonial ground is located. They occur irregularly; staging is probably always during the early dry season (May-June): and they enjoy unequal status though formally they are probably of similar character. Except in the case of wanam, their mytho-historical underpinnings are rather incoherent and poorly known.

I turn now to the major Kendall River ceremony, pucha.

(f) Pucha:

As indicated already, pucha is stylistically related to apalacha, north of the Kendall River. In fact, the people of the Kugu-Nganychara region say that pucha is their name for apalacha. It is structured somewhat differently from wanam; and like apalacha further north it may not be site-specific. In terms of economic life it is linked with fish (and porpoise) drives. There is a complex and rather diffuse mytho-historical base. An apalacha or

pucha man travels around observing various phenomena or happenings. These are recorded in songs, some of which have accompanying dances: "sea mullet"; "fish-hawk"; flying fox; "husband and wife fighting", etc. Individual songs and dances are still remembered; but the ceremony has not been performed in living memory. Some Kendall River men, both now and in the past, have had grave anxieties that pucha will be stolen by their northern neighbours. This has led to the suppression of much of the pucha tradition.

(g) Ngaynycha mongkom:

An active Kendall River ceremony centred on matpiyangga (KN1); seen as first-degree ceremony equivalent to uchanama (see Chapter 5). Sometimes linked with set of Wik-Key.ngan traditions concerning the activities of a pair of mongkom men (cf. the mongkom men referred to in the discussion of the origins of kam waya and personal naming; see, also, thaaj.m, below). Only one song associated with the ceremony (yamstick). Participants drawn from the south as well as the north bank of the river.

(h) Winychinam:

I have already referred to this ceremony in Chapter 5 (as winychinama under Initiation ceremonies/rites de passage). Many people have told me that formerly it extended from at least as far north as Weipa to Normanton in the south. Known as withiRma (Thaayorre) and welthen south of the Kugu-Nganychara region where it is no longer active. There is what is generally accepted to be a former ceremonial ground on the coast at winychinam-umu (T2); but "nothing Christmas Creek".

Kugu-Nganychara men have participated in ceremonies at Edward River, Rokeby and Aurukun. In the Kendall River area there are songs associated with winychinam, though both to the north and in the Edward River region, where dances are still performed, they are without songs and rely only on calls, clapping and foot-stamping for accompaniment.

In areas where winychinam is active, the dances take two forms: they depict the activities of kam waya or puul waya of particular local groups (estate corporations); or they represent in symbolic form the conflict between inland and coast. When one's kam waya is portrayed in a dance it is referred to by a special term unknown to women. The term is invoked primarily (and perhaps exclusively) in the context of this ceremony. The conflict between coast and inland is reflected not only in some of the actual dances. There is an ongoing dispute, throughout the Wik region, as to who really "owns" winychinam. The inlanders claim it is theirs; the evidence which weighs in their favour is that the content of the ceremony coincides well with inland 'totemic organization'. The coastal people also claim it; their grounds are that the ceremony was almost always staged on the coast.

The ceremony is not site-specific. Moreover, overall leadership may be transmitted from one estate to another. At Edward River

it came under the control of a senior man of estate ED1 ("Duck"/ Thaayorre) until recently (1974). However, this man publicly relinquished control to a man of a linked group ("Duck"/Pakanh). This confirms the general 'clan-type' structure of this ceremony (where there is a stress on principal 'totem' and linked 'totemic' groups; however, the mechanisms whereby one 'clan' achieves pre-eminence over another is unknown.

The ceremony is composite in character; in other words, each participant "brings in" his own dance, e.g., "Possum", "Flying fox", "Taipan", etc.

(4) Other ceremonies.

There are several other ceremonies. They do not mark formal transitions. These are pidhal.m, thaaj.m and ambanh.m.

(a) Pidhal.m:

This ceremony is found both north and south of the Kendall River. I have already discussed it briefly in Chapter 8, in discussing the economy of the Kugu-Nganychara region. One site where the ceremony was performed was wutunda (in estate X2), on a track leading inland from yangku. During the late dry season ("hot-dry time", kay.man), wutunda served as an excellent campsite with a large well which provided adequate water for everyone. People attended from as far afield as the "Holroyd" in the north, and "Breakfast Creek" in the south (kugu-toho-toh, "Barramundi").

North of the Kendall River, but also lying within the coastal division, uthuk or "Big Lake" provided a major pidhal.m (WM. piithal) site. The ceremonies described from this location appear to differ little from those held within the Kugu-Nganychara region.

(b) Thaaj.m:

Both north and south of the Kendall River, a comparison is apt to be drawn between pidhal.m and thaaj.m. However, while the former concentrates on the spearing of wallabies, the latter focuses on fishing with the use of nets. In the Kugu-Nganychara region the nets are said to have been first constructed by the mongkom men (discussed earlier this chapter). McConnel (1957:28-33) records a story which recounts the adventures of two men who travel about singing "Te:tyampa". This term is clearly cognate with the Kugu-Nganychara term. However, the story appears to combine elements of both the wanam and mongkom stories. It belongs to the Kirke River-Cape Keerweer region.

Traditionally, both pidhal.m and thaaj.m related to somewhat competitive hunting activities. Nowadays piithal/pidhal.m has become a rather competitive song form throughout the Wik region. New songs are continually created; and they are used as ritualised insults. People "sing each other". The insulted parties are supposed to refrain from retaliation, except through song. It is uncertain how far this is a modern innovation.

However, fights associated with piithal/pidhal.m in the past suggest that it has always been a device to cast insults.

Thaaj.m does not serve this function, though new songs are continually created in the thaaj.m tradition. People sing them to themselves as they go about their work or when they cannot sleep at night.

(c) Ambanh.m:

This ceremony has also been referred to at several points throughout the text (notably in Chapter 8). It is held in the late dry season (kay.man) and, like pidhal.m and ambanh.m, it is perhaps more concerned with the exploitation of food resources in a period of the year when concentrations of labour are required for the efficient harvesting of available items.

At the beginning of proceedings men seize their brother's wives. The men collect native honey; the women collect freshwater tortoises. On the final day the brothers engage in formal wrestling; and the man and the woman exchange gifts. The man receives a woomera from his pibi kanychi (WMB); he rubs it with "underarm smell" and returns it. His mother-in-law (pinya kanychi) strikes him over the head with leaves. From him they both receive gifts of honey. Traditionally, the ceremony was held every year.

(d) Inyji:

A dance form known as inyji is known to have existed, probably last century, in the Kugu-Nganychara region. The term is cognate with WM. iinycha, the name of a rather inactive dance form in the northern part of the Wik region.

(e) Malpa/malgeri:

Elsewhere in CYP malpa or malgeri has almost certainly had a ceremonial aspect.[1] Among the Kugu-Nganychara, and in fact throughout the Wik-speaking region, it has become popular as a "play-about" or non-ceremonial dance style. It is commonly referred to in English as "shake-a-leg". Although it is most commonly known as malpa within the Wik-speaking area, it was formerly known as anyjari on the "Holroyd" and in the region of Edward River. Further south and in the region of Normanton it is said to be known as malgara. Among the Kugu-Nganychara the major songs known are claimed to be in Kunjen.

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1. Information from Umpila-speakers on the east coast of the Peninsula tells of the introduction of malpa by a man from "Sundown way", that is, in the region of Normanton or Croydon. Special ceremonial grounds were set up at several points along the coast; and men from the Coen region participated.

Malpa may have been moving into the region prior to contact; however, the displacement of people which occurred as a result of the expansion of the pastoral frontier into the Peninsula undoubtedly sponsored its rapid spread. Many of the songs have themes relating to station life; and the form is to-day most popular with those who have worked on cattle stations in the Mitchell River and the Normanton regions.

(5) Bodily operations.

A number of bodily operations are performed in the Kugu-Nganychara region: tooth avulsion; the piercing of the nasal septum; and the cutting of cicatrices on the chest, stomach and upper arm. Of these operations, only tooth avulsion has any special significance. The major function of all operations is decorative, "to make him flash". Of the adult population to-day it is rare to find an individual on whom all operations have been performed. Even people raised in the bush indicate that they often ran away if they heard talk of a particular operation; or they simply refused to co-operate. Individual choice seems to have been exercised to a high degree. There is no direct relationship between apparent willingness to have undergone the operations and high status. If anything it is an inverse relationship. The operations may be performed by either men or women.

The significance of tooth avulsion rests on the belief that after death the spirit heads westwards, somewhere across the sea, to a lagoon called oynycham. There a man is waiting in charge of the well. When the spirit arrives the man calls out, "Come on, smile." If people laugh and show their missing tooth, he says, "Alright, here's good water to drink." If they do not have a tooth missing they will refuse to smile. The attendant fills the well with filth, e.g., dead dogs, and gives them contaminated water to drink.

(6) Death.

In the Kugu-Nganychara region the events and activities surrounding death are closely parralel to those recorded for the Archer River region. In this connexion it is worth recalling that

McConnel (1937), in her survey of "mourning ritual" in Cape York Peninsula, refers specifically to the "tribes of the ... Kendall - Holroyd" (p. 350), and observed mummified bodies and women's dances on the Kendall River (pp. 350-3). If she had witnessed any significant variations from practices on the Archer River, it can be reasonably assumed that she would have commented upon them.

In both regions disposal of the body is initially by mummification and finally by cremation; there is no ritual consumption of the flesh; and campsites are abandoned, personal effects are destroyed, and personal names are suppressed. On the basis of my own information, gathered both in discussions and from actual observation, some minor adjustments might be made in the case of two of these final points. Firstly, in the Kugu-Nganychara region, and perhaps also along the Archer River, the humpy of the deceased is destroyed, and any "shade" which he or she has used is abandoned. There appears to be no necessity to quit the whole campsite, though wells used by the deceased are "closed" and special rituals are enacted to "open" the country for hunting. (After the death of a man, the entire landscape around the camp may be closed.) Apart from fears of spirits, people are unhappy at encountering anything which may evoke painful memories, e.g., footprints of the deceased. When several days have passed small parties of men go out to "smoke" and to clean up campsites used previously by the deceased when out hunting. The ashes and pieces of unburnt wood from the fires are buried, and the area is cleared of debris, e.g., pieces of bark stripped from Hibiscus "handles" while preparing them for spears. Only when these activities have been conducted will people venture forth.

Secondly, not all personal effects are destroyed. Objects which are still new or valuable will be kept and distributed eventually as keepsakes. Only older items and nowadays personal clothing will be destroyed, mostly by burning (or, in the case of clothing, disposed of in lagoons).

In the Kugu-Nganychara region special terms are applied to close kin of the deceased. These are interpreted even by informants as equivalent to the terms reported by Thomson from the Archer River. Many of the terms are close cognates. While McConnel gave details of restrictions placed on widows, people from the Kugu-Nganychara region specify that parallel restrictions are placed on widowers.

When the desicated body is wrapped in its bark bundle it is handed over to the widow or widower. The latter is then free to move about. I have never heard any remark that would suggest that the body of the deceased must be retained within the estate of origin. Symbolic linkages are made with the estate; however, these tend to concern the spiritual component (see Sending of the spirit, below) rather than the actual body. McConnel and Thomson both fail to specify that there are special cremation centres. I have already noted (see Chapter 9) that such centres exist in the Kugu-Nganychara region, e.g., at yawu, yangku, pu'an, thaha-kungadha, thumu impa, and impa. Most cremation centres are located on the coast. Moreover, analysis of the places at which actual cremations were conducted confirms informants' remarks that inlanders were frequently cremated on the coast. No notion has ever been articulated in my presence that cremation should occur within the estate of the deceased.

Female mourning dances are known in the Kugu-Nganychara region, but they are confined, in terms of ownership, to the inland division, and perhaps, more especially, to the upper Kendall River. Known as wungga a'e (Iy. wuungka tha'iya) it was performed on the "last day" - i.e., throughout the night preceding the cremation - by female agnates of the deceased. A song commonly sung by women from the upper Kendall River was nga'a engka or "jardine", a freshwater fish species. In terms of performance, it is almost certain that the dance form was associated with mortuary rituals on the coast as well as inland.

It would be possible to add many details to the points raised especially by McConnel. However, here I wish to concentrate on a number of selected issues which are ignored in the available literature.

A major gap in the Archer River material is the failure of McConnel and Thomson to consider the causes of death. Sharp (1940:490), writing of the Yir-Yoront, comments on "the predominant femininity of the older half of the population." The same is characteristic of the Kugu-Nganychara population. Women seem to have higher chances of living to old age than men. Sharp offers the following explanation in the case of the Yir-Yoront (p. 490):

> For this society it would be expected that men over 25 years, which is the normal nuptial age for this sex when full adult responsibilities are undertaken, experience a greater risk of death than is experienced by women, for they participate in a life of sterner exigencies involving the special dangers of hunting and fishing, fighting, and a generally more mobile existence than that of women.

The same factors no doubt influence the Kugu-Nganychara population. There are numerous cases of spearings both deliberate and

accidental involving men (and less cases involving women). However, against this, it is women who would appear to run greater risks than men in other respects: my data indicate that they are more prone to snakebite because of the nature of their economic activities (though my data also include male deaths); the same applies in the case of crocodiles. There are several reported cases of women taken by crocodiles while diving for waterlilies. Moreover, Sharp ignores the risks to women in childbirth.

My own conclusions are that the imbalance relates to the greater risks run by men in fighting, and in raiding parties. In disputes over "sweethearts", it is the man more than the woman who is likely to be killed. Moreover, in the case of a raid made by a group of men from Knox Creek on a camp at the Kendall River, it was the raiders who suffered the greater casualties. In the camp, a woman and her infant son nestled in her arms were speared, the latter fatally. However, the raiders were caught in failing light and fell victims to men of the resident group for they were unfamiliar with the landscape, and were trapped in ambushes.

In my records there are a remarkable number of non-violent deaths among young unmarried men. There are many fewer cases among young women. It may be that informants regarded these deaths as more significant than the deaths of young women, though I consider this somewhat unlikely, especially as most of my data on this issue comes from women. Thus one should not rule out the possibility that certain endemic illnesses proved more dangerous to males falling within this age category; or even that the latter were psychologically more prone to certain pathological conditions. From the

point of view of the Kugu-Nganychara people such deaths are invariably attributed to sorcery. Indeed, almost all deaths are linked with sorcery, except in the case of the very old (in which circumstances death is taken as another step in an inevitable progression) or the very young (in which case it is often attributed to the improper behaviour of some close kinsman, especially the mother). With others, as the expression goes, they "cannot die for nothing." All men are regarded as potential sorcerers and there are elaborate procedures to produce the deaths of one's enemies. Crocodiles may be "sent"; and deaths by snake-bite are not normally interpreted as accidental. Human agency is attributed before other factors are invoked. In this respect the society is characterized by a high level of anxiety; even the slightest muscular spasm is enough to evoke, in some people, fear of possible sorcery. Against that it should be said that some people, particularly those who are politically powerful or adept, are somewhat sceptical in these matters, though it is they, and those who keep to themselves, who are most prone to accusations. In general it can be said that individuals spend much of their time observing others, and inwardly pondering their behaviour and motives. At the same time they are very conscious of the gazes or stares of others. Social dysphoria is always reflected in a rash of sorcery charges, vague aches and pains, and outbreaks of violence.

The story which accounts for the origins of death places a heavy stress on sorcery. At pepen, on the middle reaches of "Christmas Creek" a child is ensorcelled by an "Ibis man". He dies, and his body is hung up between two forks by his mourning mother. However, the spirit of the deceased refuses to depart. He continues to

return to the mother, and even throws a spear into the body to convince her that it is not really him. "I am still alive", he tells her. She sends the spirit away, but it returns, lonely. She sends him away again, but he returns having seen only a mangy dog. She finally sends him off "for good". Thereupon she picks up the bark bundle and, grief-stricken, she staggers down to the coast. The old lady sang for her dead son, and placed a curse on all people yet to come, saying that everyone must die, just like her son: "Let there be fighting ... May people fight and strike each other ... Death must go on." She ends her journey at tha'u-ngukara, in estate B1. There she burns the body on a large mound. A fig tree marks the spot. The songs she sang on her travels are known as ma'a-akam (possibly, according to some informants, ma'a-pukam; ma'a - hand, puka - child, -M - ABL.).

As we observed in Chapter 5, the separation of the body and the spirit is a major concern in the Wik region. Among the Kugu-Nganychara the relationship between body and spirit is seen in a variety of complex ways. Most of the senior men with whom I discussed this issue made a succession of dual divisions. The first division is between pama moo' (the body or the corporeal component) and ngangka thanhthe (the spirit component; ngangka - lower chest, diaphragm, thanhthe - fat). The latter itself comprises two entities, one which is relatively fixed, the other which is relatively unstable. Some people, no doubt at least partly under the influence of Christian doctrine, distinguish the two entities as the "good spirit", on the one hand, and the "bad spirit" or "devil", on the other. What they are signalling, through this division, is the state of the spirit after death. In one aspect,

it consists of a "shade" (non-corporeal) which can be seen by "clever men" (pama nhoyon) who sit round the body or the grave. The "shade" can be seen pursued by the ngangka thanhthe (or "devils") of the sorcerer(s). Thus the latter may be identified. The "devil" component, which is really a 'fleshly' aspect of the ngangka thanhthe, is closely identified with the body. In the first few days after death it resembles the body in all respects; the skin peels off revealing the white inner layers and the flesh suppurates. However, as the corruption of the body advances, the process is gradually reversed with respect to the "devil" (Uw. kompo puugam - "new devil"; Mu. muchuwa; Uw. nyinycham). The latter becomes increasingly young and active, and loses its unsightly appearance. Correspondingly, it gradually transforms itself from an object of fear and danger to the living, to a being similar in form and temperament to a person in the "living" world. By the time of the cremation, the spirit, in this form, should have ceased to terrorize people. It "comes like really man"; and takes its place with those who have "gone before". There is a complex set of terms in the Kugu-Nganychara dialects to refer to these various transitions and transformations.

It can be seen from these brief remarks that the body and the various spirit components are closely related. In a sense, both are fixed; and in another sense, both are subject to transformations. On one level, human beings have a fixed character or temperament. People can be divided between three broad categories: ngangka mini (mini - good); ngangka waya (waya - bad, "quiet", timid); and ngangka kuli. The 'ordinary man' or the 'reasonable man' does not fall easily into any one category, and few people can

unambigously be assigned to the category, ngangka mini. Some people like to claim that they are ngangka kuli. Kuli means quick-tempered, or, in Aboriginal English, "cheeky". They are "cheeky buggars" - like pigs, venemous snakes, bulls, certain horses, and sharks. They are dangerous and cannot be trusted. As such, they are opposed to things which are "quiet" - non-dangerous and timid. In terms of prestige, it is far better to be classified as "cheeky" than "quiet", or "meek", although it meets with greater disapprobation. After death, autopsies are performed to determine whether self-evaluations made by the deceased while alive were accurate or not. Inherently "cheeky men" can be determined by the shape of their liver. Their socially disruptive and personally damaging effects can continue after death. For example, the food presented by the widow of a "wild man" to the members of the deceased's family is liable to rot their teeth. Young people may refuse to eat it.

At another level, the status achieved by an individual during his or her lifetime can be expected to be maintained in the 'afterlife'. It is arguable, however, that Kugu-Nganychara ideology may well represent such achievement as based on certain attributes given or assigned before birth.

My doubts on such matters reflect, I believe, a real difficulty in separating the existential components of any individual, not only for the external observer, but also for the Kugu-Nganychara themselves. It is for this reason, I suggest, that the primary separation of body (kempa moo'; kempa - flesh; moo' - corporeal form) and ngangka thanhthe is believed to be difficult, and why it

is subject to special ritual acts. I refer to the "sending of the spirit".

Several days after the death, when all the important kin have arrived at the camp, people gather in the evening or at night to "sing" the spirit. Finally, after a number of songs and dances associated with the deceased are performed, with the intention of luring the spirit into the presence of the living, a senior man or woman will nominate a site in the deceased's country where the spirit is then directed. The place nominated is always a major site, or a feature associated with a major site; a prime consideration is often the presence of good drinking water. Not uncommonly predictions are made that the spirit will create observable changes in the topography of the site at which it has taken up residence. There is thus a close identification drawn between a person, a song (and dance), and a major site (frequently with associated awu) within the deceased's estate, and at which the deceased continues to have an abiding influence.

Chapter 11 :

Inter-group relations and social dynamics: the Kugu-Nganychara

> There is no doubt ... that among Protestants, the tendency to break up into sects comes from a nagging desire to be distinctive and superior, spiritually and socially, to one's neighbours. (V.S. Pritchett, A Cab at the Door.)

> Without a radical change in the entire kinship structure, the Yir Yoront cannot even tolerate mild chiefs or headmen, while a leader with absolute authority over the whole group would be unthinkable. (Sharp (1958) 1968: 5).

Among the Kugu-Nganychara there are at least two conflicting pressures, one towards individual independence, the other towards the maximization of inter-personal ties, even over long distances. At a supra-individual level, we might talk about a movement towards local group autarchy, on the one hand, and institutionalized inter-group relations, on the other. It is at this supra-individual level that anthropologists have conventionally discussed Australian Aboriginal social organization. However, I argue in this chapter that to pursue this approach in analyzing Kugu-Nganychara social life would be to lose sight of many of its crucial features, and to disguise its dynamic character.

Sharp (1968: 5-6) denies that there is any political organization among the Yir-Yoront, either in the form of leaders or councils of elders. He asks what are in fact a set of key questions:

> How under these circumstances are elaborate technological operations carried out? Who provides the organizing initiative? Who supplies coordination and direction for the elaborate hunting drives when the grass is burned off during the dry season and scores of men and women participate?

Sharp offers what is in fact a three-part answer. Firstly, he argues

that every activity comes under the jurisdiction of a local authority, viz., the individual or joint owners of the location at which the activity is to occur. In the case of joint ownership, he argues that it is the senior agnate who will wield effective authority. From his presentation it is clear that this is a function of the kinship system, rather than a structural feature of the descent system; or, at least, that the two happily coincide. This foreshadows the second part of his answer, viz., the operation of the kinship system. According to Sharp, this gives to social life an automatic and mechanical quality, providing a balanced set of checks and counter-checks. Sharp writes (p. 5):

> The nature of the fourteen masculine roles which are played by every Yir Yoront man means that every individual relationship between males involves a definite and accepted inferiority or superiority. A man has no dealings with another man (or with women, either) on exactly equal terms. And where each is at the same time in relatively weak positions and in an equal number of relatively strong positions, no one can be either absolutely strong or absolutely weak.

The third part of his answer also involves a notion of automatism, a notion of 'every man in his own place':

> Once a great hunt or other apparently complicated activity is under way, the natives' intimate knowledge of their land and of their weather and their thorough training in technical roles is sufficient to carry the operation through successfully. If events require a change of tactics in mid-course, the facts are stated and adjustments made accordingly. It is an impressive sight, after a sudden shift of wind, to see a whole line of hunters quietly improve their positions in relation to each other without a word being spoken (p. 6).

The same, according to Sharp, is true of ceremonies: "... The men representing the totems or the sacred ancestors know their parts, and coaching or direction are not needed."

I am sympathetic to Sharp's perspective on a number of issues. The Kugu-Nganychara, like the Yir-Yoront, stress land ownership and the primacy of landowners to "speak for", or to make the major decisions affecting their own "country". The relationship of the landowner to others visiting his country is that of host to guest. The Kugu-Nganychara also stress the importance of the structurally senior male, as already observed in Chapter 9. Moreover, Sharp's remarks about the asymmetrical character of inter-personal relationships within the context of the kinship system apply equally well to the Kugu-Nganychara region, and beyond. Anybody who has travelled in the bush in the west of the Peninsula cannot help but marvel at the unerring accuracy of one's navigators, or at the quiet efficiency with which camps are set up, or hunting is conducted.

However, at least for the people of the Kugu-Nganychara region, these verities only account for part of the situation. In the last chapter, I stressed the lack of coincidence between titular and effective leadership, and the differential statuses accorded participants within ceremonies; I also commented on the varying statuses of the ceremonies themselves. These facts alone suggest that among the Kugu-Nganychara there is a supra-familial level of political organization. Moreover, Sharp's comments on the operation of the kinship system contain a logical difficulty. While, at a formal level, the number of relationships in which any individual occupies the superordinate position is equivalent to the number of relationships in which he or she occupies the subordinate position, this is to ignore, at the level of practice, the number and the degree of closeness of individuals located within each of these relationships. A man who has a large number of brothers and sons is going to have a large number of close agnates to call in in cases of dispute,

and will be advantaged over a rival who has none, or only a few. In these circumstances, what does the rival do? Either he will avoid conflict, or he will seek to maximize other kin ties, e.g., by appealing to close uterine kin, demanding the services of those affines who are, according to the system, beholden to him (for they have married his daughter, or his sister's son, etc.), or, as a last resort, by seeking the support of distant agnates. These are certainly the mechanisms employed by the Kugu-Nganychara, and, by and large, in the order of priority. Finally, taking up Sharp's third proposition, the degree of automatism is clearly a relative matter. While pursuits which are conducted on a regular basis are likely to take on a mechanical aspect, this is not true for all activities, or at all times. In ceremonies and dance activities which I have attended there is a continual undercurrent of whispered instructions, signals, stops and starts, and glances to key personnel for approval. If dances or sections of ceremonies run smoothly it is because they have been heavily rehearsed or discussed in detail beforehand. Sharp's remarks are more valuable when he stresses the centrality of the individual in the "system":

> In the Yir-Yoront we find a people having an open social system, of which each individual is the center of his own universe of interaction; a system with a strong androcentric bias (but not gerontocratic), which is organized essentially as an extension of familial relations with behavior quite adequately organized by kin and clan on a variety of cultural fronts (p. 7).

Sharp is unjustified in making the leap from the individual to the family, thence to the clan, for, in analytical terms, it shifts the focus away from interpersonal relations to inter-familial relations, and thence to inter-group relations (or, if one adopts my view that clans constitute categories rather than actual functioning groups, to inter-category relations). Sharp moves freely between the levels, using kin and the kinship system as the linking device.

However, networks of actual kin and the kinship system are separate realities, and cannot be reduced one to the other. Each individual has at his or her disposal a network of actual kin; he or she also has knowledge of a systemic set of behaviours, including kin terms, which are applied with respect to those individuals who comprise the ego-centred network, and, by certain rules of extension, to people who fall outside the network. My own view is that the Kugu-Nganychara, as individuals, see their network of actual kin and the kinship system itself as a resource which can be manipulated and exploited like other resources. The kinship system serves to regulate the nature of the exploitation of actual people to a degree; and, of course, the exploiters are also exploited. At one extreme, the kinship system says that certain kin must offer their support without question; but these regulatory aspects are not insensitive to factors such as the genealogical closeness or distance of the relationship. In general, the regulatory aspects of the kinship system become less binding with the degree of genealogical distance. In this sense, the rights and duties coupled with the use of certain kin terms are applied in a primary sense to real kin, and only by principles of extension, analogous to those involved in the extension of the terms themselves, to distant or putative kin. That is, the rights and duties apply to people rather than to categories of people, e.g., to father rather than to all "fathers". In this sense, the family is indeed the basic unit of Kugu-Nganychara social life.

Genealogical ties, traced cognatically, can serve to link individuals at a supra-familial level, as well as link families themselves. Often, individuals and families are linked over long distances. These ties arise through marriage contracts, and they open up a range of social options which may be taken up under a

variety of circumstances, e.g., during periods of intra-familial confict, for a change of scene, to acquire ceremonial knowledge, to look for spouses, or even to stake future land claims on one's own or one's children's behalf.

These options can be opened up in other ways, e.g., by the sharing of common 'totems', through friendship ties contracted at ceremonial or other occasions, or becoming a desirable guest as the possessor of certain prized knowledge, or being a good singer or story-teller.

At a local level, as we have already noted in Chapter 9, residential propinquity can, and often does, take precedence over questions of kinship. In short, the sharing of activities in common, and mutual interdependence for resources, may set up patterns of regional or sub-regional living which cannot be explained simply by reference to kinship or descent-group constructs.

I wish to take up some of these issues in more detail later in this chapter. However, before proceeding, I wish to treat two matters which were discussed at some length in Chapter 6 in connexion with the Archer River people, but which have not yet been dealt with in connexion with the Kugu-Nganychara region. I refer to marriage, and the question of moieties.

Marriage

McConnel (1940: 437) writes:

> On the Kendall-Holroyd, a man may marry the daughter of *either* his mother's brother *or* father's sister, but *not* the daughter of a marriage between mother's brother and father's sister as in bilateral *Kariera* system. Preference for marriage with mother's brother's daughter exists, but marriage with father's sister's daughter is not taboo.

She supports these comments with a reference to a diagram (1934: 366). Because it is incorrectly drawn (one linkage not made, another made incorrectly), it is difficult to read. However, among other marital links, it represents marriages between members of two estate corporations, one located on the south of the lower Kendall River (McConnel's barrimundi/Wik-nantyara; my estate KS5), the other on the north bank of the river (McConnel's bush rat/Wik-natanya; my KN1). She also provides a lengthy verbatim text which appears to contradict her remarks that "The use of separate terms for father's older and younger sisters as well as mother's older and younger brothers by the coastal *Wiknatara* and *Wiknantyara* tribes is associated with this alternative form of marriage in these tribes, the *Wiknatanya* and southern *Wikmunkan* (1940: 437). She quotes her informant as saying that "My father's older and younger sisters I call my *pinya* (1940: 438)", i.e., the same term applies to both FZ+ and FZ-. However, within her presumed translation she uses the expression "father's *younger* sister" without offering any Wik-Iiyanh term. (Wik-Iiyanh is undoubtedly the language of her informant as a remark made by McConnel in parentheses indicates). This language cannot, as we have observed on a number of occasions, be classified as coastal, and it seems unwise of McConnel to use the expressions "the coastal ... Wiknantyara tribes" and "southern Wikmunkan" interchangeably, as she appears to do in the passage cited above. More seriously, none of the data she has to offer comes from further south than the Kendall River; she does not specify, in the case of the marriages listed in her diagram whether they were regarded as "straight" (correct) or not; she does not discuss patterns of intermarriage between coast and inland (nor is it certain, from her account, whether the terminological distinction for which she fails to provide convincing evidence

from the Iiyanh-speaking inland division, does not in fact occur within the coastal division; and, finally, it is clear, but not specified in her account, that it is not, in fact, either MBD or FZD which is permitted, but MB-D or FZ-D.

On the basis of information received from one of my major informants, Mr. Peret Arkwookerum, from "Christmas Creek", Scheffler (1972: 51) writes:

> ... among the Wik Ngantjera a man's most appropriate mother-in-law is his own MMBD who may be married to his MB ... Apparently, a man has no rightful claim over his MBD via his MBW unless she (the MBW) is also his MMBD, but this does not necessarily prevent him from marrying his MBD who is not also his MMBDD.

This situation will arise, of course, only when one's MB has married his actual MBD. Such marriages are described as "wrong-head".

However, as informants say, there is "nothing hard law for marriage". The major requirements are that one should not marry "too close", i.e., close consanguines should be avoided, and one should not marry "too far", i.e., into a distant group. With respect to the first restriction, the term ngangka kamum (ngangka - lower chest, diaphragm, 'spirit', kamu - blood, -M - ABL.; translated as "full-blood") applies. People say that "close cousin, real cousin can't marry; children from really brother and sister can't marry." However, like other "wrong-head" marriages, it is considered "not a real hard law." Marriages with M, MZ, FZ, Z, etc. fall outside the range of considered possibility. With respect to the second restriction, the following constructions express the situation well:

pama wayan, kuuyu watyan.m piyan

man bad woman far- ABL keep

"You're a bad man, for you've married a woman from a long way away."

or,

nhinta kuuyu thintum ke' piyan;

2 sing. NOM. woman close-ABL NEG keep

nhinta kuuyu watyanwu nhunpan

2 sing. NOM woman long way-DAT run

"You are not keeping a woman from close-to; instead, you are running after a woman from a long way away."

Given conformity with these two requirements, marriage is possible with anyone. As people are apt to say, "we marry from crocodile", alluding to the story of the Saltwater crocodile who fought with the Freshwater crocodile at Strathgordon Lagoon, and married wives from all possible categories of kin - "auntie, sister, grannie, mother, daughter, grand-daughter ..." Marriages with "outside relations" (genealogically distant) standing in these categories, while provoking the epithet "wrong-head", are subject to no particular stigma. Kin terms are re-adjusted, by and large following the principle of tracing links through the husband or the wife, whichever is genealogically closer. However, dual usages may be established. For example, a man who married his classificatory daughter (actual MMZ+DSD) began to call his WF father-in-law (ngathale) and the latter began to call him son-in-law (othom). However, the father-in-law continued also to call him 'younger brother' (ngathake). The behavioural requirements of the father-in-law - son-in-law

relationship tended to take precedence over those involved in the "big brother" - "little brother" relationship. For example, the husband would not take food from his WF. The idea of doing so filled him with revulsion: "Big shame, paynychi ekana (lit., hair stand on end)".

The reasons underlying the marriage are also revealing. The husband's older brother, G, also married "bit wrong-head", by marrying the daughter of his classificatory MB+ (ngathukwe). G subsequently began to call his father-in-law ngathale (MB-, WF); however, his younger brother, J, continued to call him ngathukwe. When J's marriage was mooted, the family of the prospective wife thought that the marriage would be a good idea for then two brothers would be married to two "cousin-sisters". G's wife and J's wife are the daughters of two sisters. The marriage of brothers with sisters is considered desirable, and it is not uncommon for women to promote the marriage of one of their sisters (either actual or MAC) with their husband's brother. The structural consequences of these unions are similar to those of the most common form of polygynous marriage, in which a man marries two or more actual sisters.

There is no clear pattern of inter-group marriage where one corporation can be seen as wife-giver to another, or wife-receiver from another. Nor is there any expression within any of the Kugu-Nganychara languages or dialects to express these or related notions. Moreover, there is no notion of corporation or totem exogamy. Marriages are contracted freely between the coastal and the inland divisions; and between the Kendall River (south bank) and "Christmas Creek". The only clear pattern to emerge is the relatively high level of regional endogamy. Very few marriages have been contracted

south of Moonkan Creek, or even with members of estate B1, south of "Breakfast Creek". In the north marriages have crossed the Kendall River, though the marriage of a member of estate K5 ("Barramundi") to a woman from the Knox Creek region, no more than 12 km. away, was regarded as improper on grounds of physical distance. Marriages of inlanders with Kaanychu-speakers or Ay.path-speakers are not unknown, though relatively uncommon. In any case, they may reflect the influence of the encroaching pastoral industry.

With the setting up of the mission at Aurukun, and later at Edward River, marriages began to be contracted more distantly. According to informants, and verifiable from mission records, the European missionary at Aurukun made periodic efforts to arrange matches between unmarried men and women. The rationalization was that it would stop young people "running wild", and "make them settle down". It is notable, now that this constraining hand has departed and people have begun to achieve a degree of autonomy on their own "outstations", that many of these marriages (including the one mentioned above) have been dissolved, and unions made subsequently by the various partners have been contracted on a more traditional, regional basis. Several comments flow from this discussion. There is no question that the single greatest cause of conflict is "sweetheart business". The level of sexual intrigue and the volatility of sexual liaisons is very high, and the conflict between arranged marriages and "true love", or marriages "for love", is a major element of social dynamics. The oral history of the Kugu-Nganychara people is riddled through with stories of men running away with other men's wives, revenge killings, and harsh penalties inflicted, within families, for promiscuous behaviour. Love magic is a major pre-occupation of both men and women, particularly among the young

(who lack confidence) and those past middle age (anxious about failing attractiveness and waning capacity). In the present situation of life on the "outstations", young men are highly mobile. One of the major reasons is the search for sexual partners. There is no doubt that this situation also obtained under the traditional régime. Where residential groups are small and comprise mostly close kin, the search for sexual partners must inevitably lead elsewhere.

Polygynous unions are culturally acceptable, and, on economic grounds, of obvious advantage to the husbands. However, although they were (and still are) contracted, many of them showed little durability. Men themselves say, "Men too jealous". The competition for wives (and for husbands) was keen. Older men generally did not, in this area, have the means, either ritual or personal, to hoard wives, or to prevent the young men from marrying. Thus, the norm for the region was monogamy. Several prominent men did manage to acquire two wives, but never three or more. The same applies to-day. North of the Kendall River, on Knox Creek, one man is known to have had eight wives, acquired by force of arms. He is remembered as dangerous (ngangka kuli), crazed (pama wadam), murderous (kogom thonom; kogom - liver, thono - one, -M - ABL.), and sexually insatiable (kuuyu-kubi, untu-idiy; lit., woman-crazy, testicles-big).

Marriages were easily dissolved. The initiative could be taken by either the man or the woman. In this connexion, it should be noted that while the husband generally enjoys the ascendant position within the marriage, women wield a considerable controlling influence. Not infrequently they "bail up", or go "on strike", telling the men they can cook for themselves, and returning to their own family

of orientation, or linking up with a sister or brother. I have even witnessed co-wives quit their husband and set up separate camp together. During periods of general conflict, or when the men stay in camp for days on end without going hunting, I have seen women "bail up" collectively, and refuse to return until matters have improved. This is not a common occurrence; such measures are taken only as a last resort to terminate the dreadful periods of lethargy or violence which can occasionally come over a camp.

Both F and M have the major rights in determining the acceptability or otherwise of particular marriages, though other close cognates of the prospective husband or wife may also wish to make their opinions known. They include FZ (especially in the case of BD), MB (especially in the case of ZS), FF, MM, etc. However, especially in cases of dispute, it is the women, particularly the mother, who often assume the more conspicuous role, expressing their dissatisfaction at proposed marriages either in public verbal abuse, or in fighting. In the case of illicit sexual activities, it is the girl's brothers who mostly take the initiative.

Immediately after marriage, men tended to live in their wife's estate. Even male informants are quite explicit on this point: "New husband lives in wife's country." Later, when he has more prestige, they may live more permanently in the husband's estate. However, visiting is maintained at a high rate, and there is a general body of belief that women must be able to return to their parents, and that children must be able to see their maternal grandparents.

Moieties

Sharp (1939: 269) quite explicitly assigns moieties as a feature of Kugu-Nganychara social organization. He lists the terms as *Kuyen(u)* and *Katpen(u)*. My own informants are equally clear that moieties are "Law for inside people; we alright." The inside people they refer to are, in linguistic terms, Bakanhu and Olkol. They are aware of moiety organization among people to the north:

> That word, wemiya[1]: if we went through winychinam before, well, we all heard those old people talk about this before. Let me explain it this way: if I had black hair then I would be wemiya.; if I had half brown hair, then I would be the other one, karpen.

JvS Which way would you be? Wemiya?

No, you look at my hair; I would be karpen.

These remarks would appear to be clear enough and to suggest that even the Kugu-Nganychara can align themselves with one or the other moiety. However, the interview continues:

> People would be split up - pama kuuyan, that's brown hair. Now, what's that other one again ... katpen. That means black hair. I would be kuuyan. My father would also be kuuyan. If I had any brothers they would be kuuyan too.

Not only has one of the names changed, but my informant has also shifted his moiety affiliation. These shifts do not necessarily suggest any confusion on the part of my informant, simply that he is looking at the matter largely as a hypothetical issue.

On another occasion, he again stressed the patrilineal character of the institution, and linked it with winychinam: "Law for dance, all pama kuyenu one side, all pama katpenu one side. My father pama kuyenu from start; me the same way - I would be kuyenu too. Me, my father; L and all his family, father and

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1. Cf. the terms Tiwim and Wemi given by Thomson for "Wik Alkan" (1972: 29).

sons, they show in dance one side; all _____ family."

These remarks are interesting in two respects, for they move from the hypothetical to the actual. The terms are in a form consistent with the informant's dialect (Mu), and are the same as those given by Sharp for the Kugu-Nganychara; their use is related to a precise event and people are named; and the group specified, through the name of a senior male member (L) and through the group's "big name" (left blank in the above quotation), is, in fact, McConnel's local group X, centred on oony-awa ("Ghost"/WM). This confirms that the moiety division was indeed present among the Archer River people, not only in the context of their dealings with the Kaanychu, but also in the context of the winychinama ceremony. However, it is doubtful if it enjoyed any other function, e.g., in the regulation of marriage, and my informant explicitly denied its importance in any other ceremony: "Not in wanam; not in apalacha; not for uchanam."

The details of the physical identification were also spelt out in greater detail: "Pama kuyenu - old people used to say for people with really curly hair, *round* hair; hard hair and bit brown one. Pama katpenu - people with really black hair and bit straight; soft hair." Other informants stressed other attributes. Another man, present at this discussion, listed the terms in his language, Wik-Ngathana, as karpan and kuyen respectively, commenting "bad word, bit swearing". The reference is to two forms of sugarbag, or native honey. The same reference is familiar to Thaayorre-speakers, south of the Kugu-Nganychara region[1]. Mayi kuyan (kuuyan?) is equated

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1. The Thaayorre (using this as a cover term for people south of Moonkan Creek) also employ the dual division within the (cont.)

with mayi atu (Th. may ada), the large or "mother sugarbag". The entrance to the hive has a long wax "nose". For this reason mayi atu may be referred to as "long prick sugarbag". Correspondingly, karpoy (the Thaayorre equivalent of karpen/katpenu) is associated with a set of "short nose" or "short prick" hives. Thus, long penis and curly hair are classified together; and short penis and straight hair are classified together.

Among the Olkol and Bakanhu, my informant indicated that the operation of the dual division is, in fact, "hard law". It applies in connexion with mortuary ritual where the widow presents food only to members of the deceased's moiety; members of the other moiety must respect food restrictions. It also functions in daily affairs. If a young child catches a fish or any other animal, only people affiliated with the same moiety may eat it.

To place this discussion back firmly in the Kugu-Nganychara region, the following points must be made. Firstly, the dual division is not an important feature of social organization. Indeed, my only information on the issue has come as a result of direct questioning. I have never heard either of the moiety terms used in a natural context. Secondly, although the division is brought to bear in the winychinam ceremony, in which 'totemic organization' is highlighted, I have been unable to get any information relating particular kam waya to one or the other moiety. Nor has it been suggested that estate corporations with mayi atu (the "big sugarbag") as kam waya should have a special relationship to the kuyan moiety.

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1. (cont) winychinam ceremony. In one dance, members of each moiety are lined up in alternate order; in another, the members of one moiety pass through the legs of members of the opposite moiety, and vice versa.

I must conclude, therefore, that the division into moieties is a marginal or highly attenuated feature of social organization in the Kugu-Nganychara region. The same is probably true of the whole Wik region.

I wish now to turn to two crucial issues, one of which is raised in very tangential fashion in the writings of McConnel and Thomson, and the other which they almost totally ignore. I refer to the notion of "family", on the one hand, and the question of leaders or "big men", on the other.

"Family"

When people write letters nowadays, the opening sentence is almost invariably, "How are all the families?" The notion of "family" is invoked in almost every social context, and in every discussion. What does it mean to the people of the Kugu-Nganychara region?

Unfortunately, my own information relating to this important question is not as complete as it ought to be. Most of my fieldwork was too concerned with attempting to identify and understand land-based units and 'totemic' groups to come to grips meaningfully with what I now realize is the key unit, at both an actual and a conceptual level, of Kugu-Nganychara social life. The English term, "family", is adopted by the Kugu-Nganychara as a translation of the term, kampan. As used by a given individual, the term designates his or her kindred. As with kin terms, an individual distinguishes between close and distant "family", or between genealogically more closely-linked members of the kindred, and genealogically more distant members.

Concretely, a man from estate T2 ("Dead body"/Uwanh), when asked to designate "really kampan", listed the following people in order:

1. "Old fella belong JA. They (i.e., JA and his siblings) our cousins" (estate X5).
2. "MGW and his family; and his sister" (estate T2).
3. "M and G ... etc." (i.e., informant's actual siblings; estate T2).
4. "T" (estate T2).
5. "Then come to GW (son to MGW; see 2, above); and KW (son to MGW)" (estate T2).

The order reflects some interesting social facts. The man referred to, JA's father, had recently died. He enjoyed very high status, and was classified as "field boss". Just before his death he was intending to set up an "outstation" within estate T2. There were multiple reasons why this move was planned. These are less important, in terms of the present argument, than the bases on which the move could be justified. The movement meant, in fact, the occupancy of land outside his own, which lay almost 40 km. to the south, on "Christmas Creek". Yet there was no resistance to his plans; indeed, a member of the owning corporation (T) described the man as "boss of the country". Part of the reason for not only the lack of resistance but even active assistance and the acknowledgement of his paramount leadership was in fact the man's high status. He was highly desirable as an ally. Moreover, his mother had, in fact, been from this estate. And the widowed wife of the senior male of one of the component lineages, and the mother of my informant, stood in the relationship of close classificatory Z+. At the mortuary rituals immediately after the death it was she who was the main female mourner. Thus my informant and his brothers and sisters traced close links to him

through two different routes - through their mother and through the dead man's mother.

The focal members of the other sets of personnel listed are all members of the informant's estate corporation. It would seem a simple matter to classify these people together as agnates and to leave the matter there. However, it is precisely the terminological relationships which obtain between some of the members of this estate, and between members of some of the linked estates (e.g., X1 and X5) which have made me reluctant to use the term clan, and to steer away from constructs based on a descent ideology. Let us look again at MGW. My informant calls him ngathale (MB-) and his sister, ngathidhe (M, MZ-). My informant also states that his FF and MGW's F were actual "blood".

It is difficult to know what is happening here. In the other cases, the matter is quite straightforward. M and G are his actual older siblings, and T is his ngathepe (Z+), for she is his FB+D. The only explanation I can offer is that a marriage in the past has led to a re-tracing of links using genealogical connexions which are closer than those available within the corporation, and leading to a re-alignment of terminology within the corporation itself. In other words, in certain, and perhaps all, circumstances, close genealogical ties take precedence over distant agnatic ties, despite the fact that the latter may link the membership of a single estate corporation.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that all members of the estate corporation share the same "big name" (wanycham). In this sense, the "big name" appears to be corporate property.

In discussing naming in detail in Chapter 10, I noted that names can reflect attributes of deceased members of the corporation embodied in living members; and they can be assigned with long-term political ends in mind. The allocation of names serving both ends can obviously operate regardless of what kin relationship is deemed to apply between the "name-giver",[1] and the "name-receiver". At this level it simply posits a collective past, with or without the maintenance of recognized agnatic links. In the same way, common ownership of land reflects a common past (and present).[2]

This raises two subsidiary but related issues: firstly, in the discussion of spirit conception (Chapter 10), it was revealed that an individual could acquire his or her conception spirit from his or her mother's country. There is no evidence, in these circumstances, to suggest that the individual thereby surrenders rights in his or her father's country, though it may be that these rights are somewhat compromised or placed at future risk. Alternatively, it may be that rights are established, vaguely perhaps, but realizable, in one's mother's country. Objective data are hard to gather on this topic, though it is tempting to hypothesize that individuals who are placed in a structurally central position in the line of transmission (e.g., as eldest son of the senior male) are more likely to be "conceived" in their father's country; and that individuals

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1. Here meaning the person whose name is given.

2. In the case of the linked estates, X1 and X5, the members of which also do not address or refer to each other as agnates, the possession of common kam waya may indicate a common past, but a diverging present and future. The same incipient developments may, of course, also be involved in the example discussed here. The "cousin" relationship established terminologically between the two lineages (which, it appears, may only recently have segmented) may prefigure a more complete fission, involving the splitting of the estate lands.

who are marginal to the business of maintaining an ongoing transmission, in that they are junior siblings, or belong to a junior lineage, are more likely to be conceived elsewhere. This would fit the data presented in the discussion of naming where a junior sibling from estate T2 took the name of a place (or man) from a neighbouring estate. These would seem to be twin aspects of the same general processes.

It is interesting, in the light of this discussion, to observe two other features of the data presented above. Firstly, in defining kampan, my informant specified individuals rather than groups. Secondly, these specifications exhibit certain regularities or patterns. The first feature suggests that what is involved are inter-personal links; or, putting it differently, if groups are linked it is as a product of the recognition of certain inter-personal ties. On this point, it is worth stressing that the reference to people rather than groups is characteristic of Kugu-Nganychara discourse. Although people may refer to members of estate B1 as "That kugu-toho-toh mob", or "That Kugu-Mangk mob", the usual procedure is to say "That PM mob". PM is the senior male member of the estate corporation (cf. the discussion of kunalum in the previous chapter).

The structurally senior male is also singled out by my informant, though several refinements may be noted. In the case of the people listed under 1 in the list of kampan, the deceased man is the former senior male; the locution used to avoid his name employs the name of his eldest son, who is, in fact, his father's successor as senior male. In the case of 2, MGW is the senior male of a component lineage of estate corporation T2, and the oldest living male; his sister is mentioned as an afterthought. In the

case of 3, M and G are my informant's actual older brothers, listed in order of birth. His eldest brother is not named; however, for various reasons he has no real claim to be considered as the defining or senior male within his lineage: he has remained unmarried and has no recognized heirs; he has spent many years away from his immediate kin; and because he has remained uneducated, and speaks little English, he is not in a position to negotiate with the European world. In the case of 4, T is a woman, but the only surviving member of her (minimal) lineage; and with 5, my informant drops a generation from MGW, again following birth order as he proceeds from the older son (consciously perceived in the discussion as about to start his own family) to younger son (not yet married).

In specifying kampan, individuals normally name members of their own family of orientation, frequently listing off siblings, then siblings' children. Links are traced through both males and females, showing the definite cognatic character of the construct. However, the example given does draw attention to the patrilineal bias or "skewing" of the society.

One point which should not be lost is that individuals, surrounded by a vast network of actual kin, can tap into it at various points, and at different times. The system allows a high degree of personal optation. Individuals can always call upon a kin tie to justify their presence at any camp-site or at any event. If links through "father's side" prove inconvenient, one can always shift attention to "mother's side". The Kugu-Nganychara maintain a knowledge of actual genealogical ties which extends well back in time, frequently five or six generations beyond Ego. Remarks such as "Our grannies came from two grannies", i.e.,'Our respective

mother's mother's mother's mothers were actual sisters, from the same father and mother', are common.

Leaders and leadership - "Field bosses"

In the previous section I noted the pivotal position of certain individuals within families, and lineages. I have also had recourse to the notion of structural seniority discussed at some length in Chapter 9. Given this presentation as it stands, it would be easy to accept the view that leadership, following Sharp's argument, is simply a function of the kinship system (and of clan organization), and that there is no '"higher political authority"' beyond that provided by '"heads of families"' (1968: 7). McConnel (1934: 323) writes in a similar vein:

> The older men, *POLA*, or father's father's, are the depositories of the clan lore. The chief leaders, or executive, are the *mantaiyan* i.e., strong men, who superintend ritual procedure and see to it that traditions are revered.

In the course of discussing ceremonial life in the Kugu-Nganychara region, I noted the use of the term, pama manu thayan (lit. thick or strong neck), and indicated that it referred to a broadly defined age-grade, consisting of men in the prime of life, who, it might be expected, would have married, had children, and passed through a number of ceremonies. They could also be expected to have taken up a position of some eminence in their own estate. In other words, they should have achieved a degree of personal independence, and have become the focus of a smaller or larger network of kin. The English term, "old man", applied to such men, need not be taken too literally. Men of normal capacities could have expected to have achieved this status by their mid-thirties or early forties. The term is simply one of respect.

I also noted that certain men are singled out within the course of the major ceremonies, in recognition of their superior qualities. This marks the first stage in their progression towards the status of "boss" or "biggest boss". In the Wik region, and in the context of ceremonial life these men are known as "field bosses". They are also, as a matter of course, pama manu thayan.

It is tempting to argue that each estate corporation would ideally have its own ceremony. Indeed, in the Kugu-Nganychara region, with its proliferation of ceremonies, and hints of others either at the final point of decline or at the first moment of germination, this ideal seems to have provided the mainspring of an enduring process. The conditions under which it might be realized would include the following: firstly, the continuing presence of men of capacity within each estate to support the local ceremony; secondly, the capacity of the estate to provide the economic resources necessary to support a large visiting population; thirdly, something of more than local interest within the meaning of the ceremony to ensure non-local as well as local participation; and fourthly, the existence of some overall planning authority to organize scheduling etc. None of these conditions is easily met. Taking only the first of them, we have already noted, in concrete terms, the gap between titular and actual leadership within two of the Kugu-Nganychara ceremonies. In one case (wanam) the official "bosses" had died out; in the other case, the official "boss" was considered incapable. In both cases the "bosses" came from elsewhere. In the case of kunalam, the surrogate "bosses" came from a neighbouring estate. Potential embarrassment was avoided by calling the ceremony a "company bora". In the case of wanam, two principles appear to have been invoked, one based again on notions of vicinity or neigh-

bourhood, the other based on the maximization of kinship links, viz., by invoking claims to the land in which the ceremonial site is located through actual M and WM respectively. Another man has adopted the stratagem of stretching the boundaries of his mother's country to the north-west so that it includes the site. However, to a very large degree, these are post facto operations, convenient rationalizations in culturally acceptable terms (for the most part), to justify seizures of the ceremony which have already occurred, by people possessed of exceptional capacities or talents.

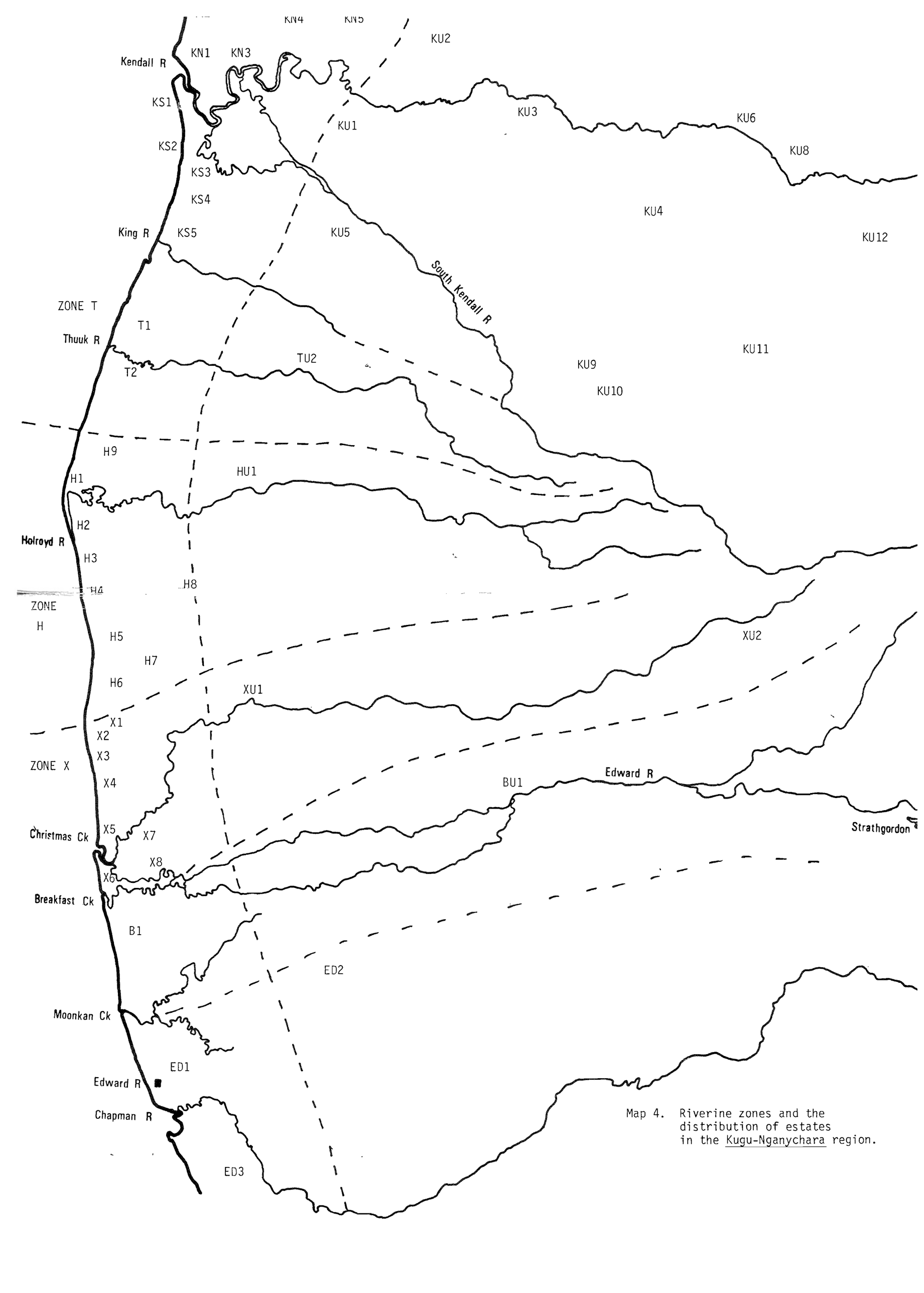
There can be no question that certain individuals, both among the Kugu-Nganychara, and throughout the Wik region, achieved a level of eminence and prestige beyond that enjoyed by their peers, and wielded authority at a supra-familial level. During the rest of this chapter I hope to explicate some of the mechanisms of leadership exercised at this higher, or wider, level. How do certain men achieve this status? Clearly, their structural position within the society is a major factor. It is difficult for junior siblings, however talented and resourceful, ever to achieve pre-eminence.

The Kugu-Nganychara have an extensive lexicon to describe various personal attributes and skills. Good hunters (pama thupu) are distinguished from poor hunters (Iy. pama yapinh; Uw. pama yapi waya); liars and "loud mouths" from those who are truthful and reliable; those who are lazy from those who are lively and active; and so on. Many of these personal characteristics are encapsulated in pithy nicknames. In short, the society is predisposed to make categorical distinctions between individuals on the basis of certain personal qualities. Hunting and fighting skills; organizational skills; perseverance; social skills, e.g., the capacity to

defuse tense situations, storytelling, verbal repartee, being a "funny man", creating songs and dances; brilliance as a singer or dancer; physical stature, handsome appearance, and good skin colour; the willingness to assume family responsibilities; being a willing and uncomplaining host; intelligence; knowledge; moral rectitude and "straightness" in personal dealings: these are some of the positive qualities prized and admired in the Wik region. However, qualities need not necessarily be altogether, or unambiguously, positive. Strong-headedness; manipulativeness; quick or violent temper; to be suspected of sorcery: these may also impel people along the path to political success. To be a strong man and feared is perhaps of greater utility in a society where people are called upon to ensure the safety and to relieve the anxieties of others, almost as a daily experience, than to be liked or to be popular. The latter attributes may imply a lack of dignity, perhaps even something skittish and childish. In short, it is not necessary or desirable to be 'one of the boys'.

To have the backing of a large number of close kin is clearly an advantage for a man with political ambitions. To elucidate some of the other possible factors I wish to turn to more concrete considerations, viz., the size and nature of estates, and patterns of residence.

To focus discussion I put forward two propositions: firstly, that estates are regarded as inalienable; and, secondly, that individuals wish to reside within their own estate. Both propositions clearly reflect Kugu-Nganychara ideology. The first is continually reiterated in such expressions as "'Nother man can't take over my country". The second is less forcefully presented, although individuals



Map 4. Riverine zones and the distribution of estates in the Kugu-Nganychara region.

acknowledge that they are most secure when they are within their own country. Their personal identity is closely bound up with it, and old people, in particular, frequently remark that they wish to die in their own country. In addition, land tenure is not independent of use. Informants continually legitimize their claims to a particular estate by saying that "My father was using that place". The implication is that if people do not demonstrate their ties to a particular estate by continuing use, their claims to it are likely to be placed in jeopardy.

As for the estates themselves, two features stand out sharply: firstly, the smallness of the coastal estates relative to the inland estates; and secondly, the high degree of variability in the size of the coastal estates. Located within the coastal division, between the mouth of the Kendall River and the mouth of "Breakfast Creek" there are twenty-three identifiable estates, of which sixteen fall between pu'an (north of the "Holroyd" mouth) and thiji ("Breakfast Creek"), a distance of c. 40 km. That is, each of the estates in zones H and X has a coastal frontage, on the average, of just under 2.5 km. These figures may be adjusted to take into account four estates of which no members now remain, and one (H8) which, according to most but not all informants, does not extend westward of the coastal plain (i.e., it contains no sites on the beachfront or on the coastal dunes). For the remaining eleven estates, this gives a figure of 3.6 km.

North of pu'an, a single estate (T2) has 14-15 km. of coastline. Further north, five estates (including KS1, with no surviving members) occupy the coast from the "King River" to the mouth of the Kendall.

Inland the estates are uniformly extensive, stretching from near the eastern margin of the coastal plain up "Christmas Creek", the "Holroyd" and "Thuuk" River to the point where they branch off from the "South Kendall". It is useful to note that informants conceptualize the inland estates precisely in these terms. Assuming the accuracy of their accounts it means that each estate stretches 35-40 km. along an east-west axis. For the upper Kendall zone (KU), the pattern is less clear, and will require proper mapping if it is to be determined properly. There can be little doubt, however, that estates along the upper Kendall are equally extensive as on the upper "Holroyd" (HU) or the upper "Christmas Creek" (XU).

Returning to the case of estate T2, most of the long coastal frontage (11-12 km.) consists simply of a foredune which immediately opens out to the east onto the grasslands and saltpans of the coastal plain. It supports few shade trees. Indeed, it is possible to elicit from informants the location and the species of each tree found along this stretch of coastline. It is regarded generally as inhospitable country. During the late dry season (agu kay.man) it becomes difficult to find fresh water, even in deep wells. Members of the estate themselves refer to it as "hard country ... like a desert". (This stands in marked contrast to normal practice. People habitually speak of their estates in the most glowing terms: "Too many fish, too many minya, too much sugarbag, too many waterlily too many yam. Everything too fat. Nobody can go hungry in my country.") For the remaining 3 km. the foredune is backed by the dune system covered with patches of scrub and other complex plant communities, less well developed here but typical of the coastline encountered in most of the other estates. Water is easily available in wells sunk in the shell beds at the bottom of the swales which

lie between the parallel ridges. During the dry, residents must either retire to this section of the coastline, or retreat inland. (My notes include extensive data on reciprocal visiting between estate T2 and estate HU1.)

Where the coastal dune system is most highly evolved the estates are generally small, indicating a correlation between environmental factors and the size of estates. Apart from guaranteeing a relatively certain supply of water, the coastal dunes provide ready access to a number of micro-environments, including relatively extensive patches of "scrub" where yams are most abundant.

However, the correlation is by no means straightforward. One of the smallest estates (X6), located on the coast between waalang and thiji, occupies perhaps the least hospitable environment along the entire coastline. The estate labelled T1 is much smaller than T2, but, from an environmental point of view, is perhaps even less favourable.

It can easily be observed from the map that a number of estates cluster near the Kendall River mouth, at the mouth of the "Holroyd", near or at yangku, and at the mouth of "Christmas Creek". Earlier I indicated that thaha-kungadha and thampenych, at the mouth of the "Holroyd", yangku, and waalang (at the mouth of "Christmas Creek") were all focal sites. It is important to analyse the relationship between these focal sites and this observable clustering effect.

There are three reasons for suggesting that the river mouths provide the most strategic campsites along this stretch

of coastline. They are strategic in at least three ways. Firstly, from the point of view of resources, they provide the best and most easily exploited fisheries. Large fish may be speared as they negotiate the shallow bar. The intertidal zone attains its maximum width at the river mouths. This zone is rich in shellfish, and the various rays may be speared as they move over the mudflats and sand banks with the incoming tide. The river mouth is a funnel through which fish moving between the rivers and the sea must pass.

Secondly, the river mouths (because of the shallow bar) serve as major crossing points. Inland the rivers break up into a number of channels which may mean multiple crossings for people travelling either north or south. The beach itself serves as a major north-south "road." Although the river mouths prove the only real impediments along this route, they also represent the simplest choice of crossing.

Perhaps everywhere in the world, major river crossings serve as important social foci. In the Kugu-Nganychara region, it is easy to wade across most of the river mouths at low tide. (At other times, and more reluctantly, logs - "floating wood" - are used, with dilly bags, and nowadays, clothes, perched on the head.) Campsites near the mouths serve as points both to wait for the tide to fall, and to observe when conditions favour crossing. From the point of view of defence these sites allow high visibility. With the sea to the east, the river either to the north or to the south, exposed beachline in the opposite direction, intruders might only approach unobserved through a narrow sector from the east (a sector of less than 90°). Even then they would be obliged to approach through the estates of other corporations based on the same river, and with

a sense of riverine loyalty. (In this connexion it is worth noting that "outside people" run the risk of being sucked down by a whirlpool which would emanate from the awu - waychi-awu - at the bed of the river at waalang.) From a less sinister perspective, these campsites provide ideal locations (given fairly intense movements up and down the coast) for people to engage in an active social life.

Finally, these sites are also conceptually strategic. The Kugu-Nganychara are apt to see the river mouth as the base of a tree, from which it is easy to envisage the tree as a whole. This is reflected in the fact that the names given to the river systems are derived from the names of places located at or near their mouths. Moreover, these terms apply not just to the rivers, but also to the people whose estates lie along them. For example, the expression, pama waalang wakanh, 'the people who "walk about" waalang', can apply to people other than members of the corporation who control the site; it is frequently used to describe all people of the lower river region. Regardless of their precise estate affiliation these people will, in certain contexts, specify that they "come from waalang."

These remarks suggest a major line of enquiry. If these sites serve not only as foci of particular estates, but also of riverine systems, might not the focal male or "boss" of the estate in which this site falls serve as a social focus of the whole system? Expressing it differently: if a site can serve as the focus of what, in social terms, constitutes a COMPANY (defined earlier), might not the "boss" of the site himself constitute the "boss" or focal male of the COMPANY as a whole?

The current "boss" of the river mouth at waalang (from estate X5) describes his position in the following terms:

> Waalang is like the biggest name, the biggest place (agu nhampa a'e). I am boss for that place (pama agu kunyji). It doesn't matter what people come in (to that camp). Anyone can use that well, the same well used by everybody. (But) the boss man comes in front (putham); other people come behind (kuyam). The boss man says: You camp here; you camp there".
>
> I'm boss because my father comes from the biggest grandfather (pama thepa ngathale manu thayan, pama (agu) kunyji manu thayan).

His estate focuses on the north bank of the river (i.e., waalang wengk kungkem: wengk - bank, kungke - N), and he controls both awu located at waalang - viz., waychi-awu, dilly bag, and nga'a-awu, catfish and salmon.

The south bank of the river, i.e., waalang wengk yibem (yibe - S), is normally given as the focal site of another estate (X6), which belongs to descendants of the "smallest grandfather". The latter was said to have "run round too much in mother's country", i.e., H8. He is survived by one son, who is also the only surviving member of the estate (and has no heir). According to the "boss" of the north bank, the son (whom he calls ngathi emath.n - FB-) should follow in his father's footsteps and "look mother's country". That is, he argues that because of the actions of the father, the son has no rights in estate X5. The estate, X6, seems to have been carved out by the father as an independent niche. It has symbolic more than economic value, for it consists only of a small number of inhospitable sites. The son "uses" waalang wengk yibem. Even in recent years he has camped there, digging new wells and building a substantial wet season shelter. Moreover, one of his dogs takes its name from the campsite: walu yi'i (walu - cheek,

yi'i - fatty layer beneath skin, sandy margin to the shore), prominent convex curve of the bank on the southern side of the river at waalang. Another dog name also derives from waalang: thayje waalang, "sea break at waalang". However, politically (and residentially) he habitually allies himself with the "Holroyd". In any case, given a traditional régime, he would find it difficult to exist within his estate - either because the estate is extremely poor in non-marine resources (and could not support a large population) or because he lacks labour (beyond his own and that of his wife). He would be caught between lack of resources, on the one hand, and lack of manpower, on the other.

This is only one case of an estate which appears to have segmented from the larger and more important estate focused on waalang (N. bank). The estate labelled X4 also seems to have split off at some period in the past. Dog names again link members of the estate corporation with waalang: thayje waalang, "sea break at waalang" (cf. above), and yuk upun waalang, 'stump of "milk tree" at waalang'. However, it has never been suggested to me that members of this corporation have any continuing rights to waalang itself. The nature and status of their estate remain rather cloudy. Along the coast memola is normally assigned to the estate. However, (punda) kupung, immediately to the south, is assigned to X5; and memola itself is described, admittedly by a member of X5, as also "company" for X5. That is, although memola is claimed to be the principal site of estate X4, a claim acknowledged by members of X5, the latter do not necessarily relinquish an interest in the site. In terms of naming, the "boss" of X5 states that his daughters take their names from their "aunties" ("FZ") in X4. The "boss" further states that men belonging to the two estates have the same

"big names" and "small names". This is not borne out in practice for there is only a single "small name" which is shared. However, English names are transferred between the two estates, in all cases from X4 to X5. In fact, the evidence seems to suggest that vis-à-vis estate X4, the ascendancy of X5 at waalang is a relatively recent phenomenon, and despite the fearsome reputation attributed to his father and father's father by the present "boss", it may date only from the rise to prominence of this man himself. Certainly he himself says that he and the members of X4 are "all one"; and that they are "no more outside people; they are waalang people". Now that no old men survive from this estate, he says that the younger men both address and refer to him as "boss": pama ngathi ngathame (yethaman) (ngathi - F, ngathame - MM, MMB, yethaman - alive). The term ngathi is here used in a connotative rather than a denotative sense. In other words, it refers to the jural authority vested in father (as "boss"), not to a kin position[1]. The actual kin term here is ngathame. This signals the fact that the two lineages are related through a distant brother-sister tie (i.e., through opposite-sex siblings who shared the same father and mother).

The other estate linked through kam waya with X5, within the "Christmas Creek" region is X1: "No matter different families, language one, kam waya one." Although also linked with waalang, the link is more tenuous than in the case of estate X4. The "boss" of X5 regards them as "out from area". Their sphere of influence

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1. The term pibi or ngathi is not uncommonly used in this sense. It can be applied to any man who stands in the place of father, either in actuality (e.g., in the case of adoption) or symbolically (e.g., as the senior male in a residential group). This usage, as in the case described here, does not affect the application of the normal, genealogically-based, kin terms.

is centred more on yangku (see below). Nonetheless, they are regarded as "close-to relations". X1 and X5 are linked through an opposite-sex sibling tie, but closer than in the case of X4 and X5. Members of X1 refer to members of X5 in the same generation by cross-cousin terms, and vice versa. The "boss" of X5 stands in the relationship of MB- to the senior generation of X4 males. The two estates do not share any "company places" on or near the coast, but further up the river they stand in a "company" relationship. X1 does not share "big names" or "small names" with either X4 or X5.

This exhausts the range of linked estates (all "Possum"/Kugu-Mu'inh) within the "Christmas Creek" zone. However, it is useful to devote a little attention to the other estates. On the coast they are X2 ("Diver"/Kugu-Mangk), X3 ("Carpet snake"/Kugu-Mu'inh), X7 ("Watersnake"/"like Kugu-Mangk") and X8 ("Freshwater shark"/Kugu-Muminh). X2 still survives, but it is centred on yangku (see below) rather than on waalang. In certain contexts, members will nonetheless still identify themselves with the latter. The other estate corporations are now defunct. Formerly, X3 clustered with X1 and X2 around yangku. X7 shared a number of "company places" along the river with X5 and X8. Empay wakanh was a favoured fishing location, described as "fishing place for all Mu'inh people". Also on the river, inyenge, in estate X8, was a major flying-fox camp, and was exploited by people of the whole lower river system. Estate 7 has now been transferred to members of estate X1, who were actual DC to the last surviving member (a woman). Estate 8 is also likely to be transferred to the same estate for one of its members has a claim through his MF, who was the last surviving member. There are other claimants, though, because they will die childless,

their claims will lapse. In this way the whole lower river will become an exclusively Mu'inh-speaking zone.

At the interface of coast and inland there are a number of important sites: kurka pelen, pinta (ngaka pukam) (= big water), agu panych ("poison place"), konhdhe, and pepen. The "boss" of X5 describes kurka pelen as "company place" with X2 for it falls on the junction of "roads" leading from waalang and yangku towards pepen. The latter is described as "full company" (agu thaha-thon.n). It is the formal meeting point of all the coastal people in the "Christmas Creek" zone with the inlanders, particularly the members of estate XU1 ("Sugarbag"/Wik-Iiyanh) which stretches further upstream along the river. Members of each of the estates on the lower river had their own shade trees, rights to which were transmitted in perpetuity. The normal meeting time was in kay.man ("hot-dry time") as water became scarcer on the coast. The same applied to the other sites mentioned. Pinta is associated with a large swamp, famed for its water-lilies (mayi mangke; WM. may umpiya). One man likened it to a large city shop:

> Pinta was a main camping place, agu mu'am, people coming in for water-lilies. Full company. For mayi, outside people can come, just like the city, like main shop. People can be asked to come in or come in friendly. They can't sneak in. If people see tracks (of strangers) or if those outside people light bushfires, well, then, everyone get funny feeling ...

Despite the fact that agu panych is both named and classified as a "poison place", it was still used as a camping place by all residents along the river:

> Poison place, but we still living there before. Main camping place. But people couldn't eat fish from that lagoon. Only oldest people (pama manu thayan) can eat. Same for water-lilies. Any outside men can eat, as long as

> Other people hunting a long way out from the lagoon. But they can drink from the lagoon without restriction; straight from the swamp.
>
> Women and children have to sleep on tea-tree bark. They cannot make their bed straight on the ground. They can't sit down on the ground without regard to this rule either.
>
> I camped there during oynych.n ("dry-wet time") and kay.man ("hot-dry time"). (P.A./ estate X5.)

The seasonal movement between coast and inland was no doubt a regular feature of social life on the lower "Christmas Creek". Especially in the intermediate zone between coast and inland the composition of residential groups must, more often than not, have presented a composite character. It is unknown to what degree people from the upper reaches of the stream (notably from XU2) interacted with people on the lower river. It seems that they may have looked further inland rather than downstream. Certainly little is known on the coast about such matters as kam waya, personal names, etc., with respect to this estate. This is somewhat different for estate BU1. "Christmas Creek" people claim members of this estate as "company" for their river. However, this may reflect common residence in Edward River settlement as part of the post-contact situation, rather than traditional patterns of interaction. The issue must remain open. Certainly they appear to have formed a "company" with people on the lower Edward River (i.e., "Breakfast Creek" and "Moonkan Creek"), viz., with estates B1 and ED1. In this sense they may be seen as constituting a riverine COMPANY, controlling and exploiting an isolable land unit, and supporting their own COMPANY-based ceremony (pilam).

One crucial question which remains for the "Christmas Creek" zone is the extent to which inlanders camped at the coast during

the wet season. Data are lacking on this point, though it is known that members of estate XU1 participated at coastal ceremonies, e.g., wanam at thaha-kungadha (cf., also, the discussion of the "Holroyd" and "Thuuk" zones, below).

The "boss man" for estate XU1 married a Kaanychu woman from the remote interior and took up residence in Coen. Neither he nor his male siblings have had any children. The "boss" of estate X5 approached him about the question of transmission in the event of his death. An arrangement was reached whereby he (the "boss" of X5) and his family could use and occupy the estate immediately; and gain permanent rights to it after the owner's death. This was important for it gave unequivocal access to pepen, free of the doubts which must be attached to many, if not most, "company" sites. There were fears that it would be taken over by Coen people. Discussions took place in the context of proposals to set up "outstations" in the "Christmas Creek" area. The "boss" of X5 was certain that his first choice of camp-site would be waalang. However, the latter had little utility from the point of view of running cattle, and pepen was regarded as being at the centre of good cattle country. A camp established there would become an "outstation" of waalang. In a real sense, it is probable that this is the relationship which obtained between waalang and all other sites (nhampa woynyo, "small places") on the lower "Christmas Creek" in past times.

The estates immediately surrounding yangku constitute an apparent sub-zonal COMPANY within the wider "Christmas Creek" zone. It is not tied to a river system as such, though there is a complex network of watercourses draining the coastal dunes which

are extensive in the immediate hinterland and support large pockets of vine-forest (see Figure 2 in Chapter 8). Consequently, the supply of fresh water is not a problem and vegetable foods are abundant. There is an elaborate system of "roads" running inland to the coastal plain which is a source of geese eggs at the end of the wet season, and thence to the important sites located along the main body of "Christmas Creek", and referred to in the earlier discussion. In other words, it provides excellent access to a number of large-scale, rich environments. These advantages may counterbalance to a large degree the lack of a river estuary, and the absence of mangrove habitats. There are a number of sites within this area which are assigned high status: e.g., in estate X1, piching, thugu and kampingu. There are two major ceremonial sites within the area: one at yangku, the focal site; the other at mutha-awula, in close proximity to the sites just mentioned. Given that the two ceremonies - kunalam and munka - occurred traditionally in the early dry season ("dry-wet time"), it seems likely that they were supported by extensive vegetable harvests.

The next river mouth north of "Christmas Creek" is that of the "Holroyd". In this zone there is at present no man who stands out as leader. The available evidence suggests that in the fairly recent past the leader came from estate H2 (kugu-thu'a/Kugu-Ugbanh), for ownership of thaha-kungadha is still vested in this estate, as well as the controlling interest in the wanam ceremony, despite the fact that the membership of the estate is now defunct. This continued acknowledgement of the rights of a corporation (or a person) long disappeared is typical in a situation where the question of ownership has yet to be resolved. It allows the conflicting claims to remain beneath the surface, and avoids

If a leader were to emerge on the lower "Holroyd" he would almost certainly come from one of two estates: H3 ("Carpet snake" Mu'inh), or H4 ("Spear-handle"/Muminh). The membership of H3 comprises, at its senior generation level, a number of brothers descended from the same man. The latter was vastly respected during his lifetime, and for many people he symbolized the continuity of "bush life". Even in his final years he spent much, if not most, of his time in bush camps. While titular authority for the wanam ceremony resides with H2, effective leadership lies, disregarding the "boss" of X6 for the moment, with the "boss" of X5 and with men of H2. Many of the major dances show the two corporations as standing in ritual conflict. In a sham fight which serves as prelude to the wallaby dance this theme is made quite explicit. The two men, one from each estate, and representing the two kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers, reconcile their differences and proceed to "spear" the other dancers. Rôles in this dance have been assigned to men from these two estates for at least two generations, and young men from the next generation have already been selected and trained for their parts. However, despite these considerations, the men of H2 have been slow to take up their chances in non-ceremonial contexts. The reasons are difficult to determine. Sibling rivalry is no doubt a factor; two of the most senior candidates lack confidence and are prone to sorcery, falling from time to time into periods of deep depression; and the most likely candidate, who has spent a number of years out of the area, only occasionally asserts himself publicly. Perhaps they have all lived under the shadow of their father too long. The outcome is that they tend to look to the "boss" of X6 for leadership. He is the major singer for the region, and exerts a powerful personal aura. He links himself to thaha-kungadha

through his mother[1].

The more likely figure is a man from H4. Although he has spent many years out of the area, he pursues his objectives vigorously, and has enlisted the support of his deceased older brother's sons.

In terms of land tenure, the situation on the lower river is extremely complex. In many respects the pattern can be seen as reflecting the desire of multiple estates to gain a share in the river mouth (and perhaps the ceremonial site located there). Thampenych, near thaha-kungadha, constitutes the main camp-site (agu nhampa a'e) falling in estate H4 ("Spear-handle"). Its members are described as agu thampenych wakanh, the people who "run about" thampenych. However, estate H3 ("Carpet snake") is said to "come behind" in the same site. That is, although its members do not have a controlling interest in the site, they have uninhibited access to it. They are, as it were, junior partners. In fact, people state that H3 and H4 are "all in one mob." There are two tracks leading inland from thampenych to a swamp called agu pukam. The latter is again classified as agu kunyji for, or belonging properly to, H4. The more southerly track is controlled by H4; the more northerly track is controlled by "Carpet snake" (H3). Kiban, the next site north along the beach from thampenych, is described as "company place" for both H3 and H4. Agu aye, the next site north of kiban, is linked with thaha-kungadha; it is regarded as the "main camp" of H2 (kugu-thu'a). H3 has no major camp-site. Its members are described as agu matpi yipipi wakanh, people of the coastal

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1. This claim is difficult to legitimate, for it depends on extending the territory of estate H8 (the estate of his mother) some distance to the NW. The best that can be said is that his mother comes from the same river. In the case of powerful men, such claims are often sufficient.

dunes, by "inside people". That is, they are known by a topographic reference rather than by a major camp-site in which they have exclusive ownership. Instead, they are continually described as having "half-share" in particular sites.

Estate H8 which has no coastal frontage is difficult to allocate either to the coast or to the inland division. Much of its inland country is very poor (classified as agu konyjen) and remains inundated for much of the year. Members of this estate share a common frontage with estate HU1 along a section of the "Holroyd River" inland where it forms a succession of linked freshwater lagoons. However, HU1 is normally conceived as controlling the main river.

At the junction between coast and inland, the pattern of exploitation and residence seems to be similar to that already described for the same intermediate area on "Christmas Creek". The two large permanent lagoons at thupijiy still provide the foci of dry season camps made up of people from a number of estates. It is "company land" par excellence. People tend to locate themselves in terms of the direction of their "country" so the camp takes on the appearance of a reduced model of the whole system of owned estates. Several trees at the lagoons are identified with individuals whose actual estates lie some distance away.

Thumba-awu, at the western end of the long inland lagoons which form the main river, falls more decidedly within estate HU1. However, the allocation of camp-sites to visitors who arrive on a regular basis during the late dry season follows the same pattern as at thupijiy which lies only a short distance downstream (see

Figure 3 in Chapter 8). The composition of residential groups recorded from events remembered from the past (e.g., deaths, tooth avulsions, the cutting of chest scars, etc.) and located upstream from thumba-awu also exhibit a composite character. In short, interaction between the upper river and the lower river appears to have been conducted at a high level. Again, similar to "Christmas Creek", details of interaction further inland are unclear. Members of estate HU1 have never raised the issue; all of them have married towards the coast (into Zones X, H).

There is only one case of linked corporations (from a 'totemic' viewpoint) within the "Holroyd" zone (H6, 9), though both are defunct and the available data are hazy. H6 may, in fact, be indistinguishable from X2. There are no conspicuous instances of local group segmentation as on "Christmas Creek". However, three of the coastal estates, viz., H8 ("Freshwater shark"), H3 ("Carpet snake") and H5 ("Possum") are linked with estates in Zone X. HU1 is linked with T2, in the "Thuuk River" zone.

The "Thuuk River" constitutes a much smaller system than either the "Holroyd" or "Christmas Creek". In fact, it only embraces three estates, two on the lower river, one on the upper river. In many respects it can be seen as an outlier of the "Holroyd" similar to yangku in Zone X. Pu'an is a major coastal site within estate T2 ("Dead body"/Uwanh). It is classified as "main camp", and members of the estate can be referred to as agu pu'an wakanh, people from pu'an. Members of this estate have been described as forming a "company" with estates H9 ("Diver"/Mangk) (now defunct) and H1 ("Stingray"/Ugbanh) who occupied the coastal dunes north of the "Holroyd". Pu'an falls towards the northern end of this dune

While the well at pu'an supplies water throughout the year, including at the height of the dry season, members of the estate were accustomed to travelling inland to sites at the eastern margin of the estate, and forming "company" with members of estate HU1, especially during kay.man ("hot-dry time"). These estates share a common boundary. Correspondingly, members of estate HU1 would often travel to pu'an for the wet season, or at other times of the year. Estates T2 and HU1 are also linked at a conceptual level for they share the same kam waya (both kugu-uthu, "Dead body"). However, they have different linguistic affiliations (Kugu-Uwanh and Wik-Iiyanh) respectively; and they do not share dog or personal names.

The Kendall River is a much larger stream than "Christmas Creek" and the "Holroyd". The topography of the lower river shows obvious evidence of rapid siltation, severe flooding and erosion; and the area at the river mouth is bleak and inhospitable. Fresh water is scarce for much of the year. Consequently, the major river-side camp-sites are located several kilometres upstream. Kuli-aynychan is the first major camp-site as one moves up the river. It is found on a high ridge from which a steep bank falls into the river. The camp-site is divided sharply between thick vine-scrub where, in the past, wet season camp-sites were established; and an exposed area where dry season camps, and wet season day-camps, were established. There is extensive surface debris, consisting of the shells of edible shellfish (including both marine and estuarine species), yuku ol, ironwood hammers used in preparing various foods (various roots, rhizomes, and the dried Nonda fruit) consumed during the late dry season, and decayed pannikins, billy cans, pipes, and pieces of broken bottles. The evidence confirms local accounts that the site

was used throughout the year, as a base from which to exploit the surrounding environment, including the beach and lower estuary, for some kilometres around, and until recent times. In the scrub, depressions indicate the positions where humpies were located. The ownership of these dwelling sites may still be plotted. The data indicate a composite population made up of men and women drawn from all the lower river estates.

Along the river itself there are a number of landings and crossing points. These are owned on a "family" basis (i.e., by a man and his sons). In other words, each estate corporation has its own sites (landing, dwelling sites, and often wells) within a single camp-site.

Currently the politically dominant estate on the lower river is KS5 ("Barramundi"/Uwanh). It is difficult to know how recent its rise to pre-eminence has been. There are only two men over fifty still living. Neither is of the type likely to attract or to assume leadership; in any case, both married rather distantly, thereby almost ensuring their political marginality. Moreover, the population has exhibited a marked preponderance of women over men for some generations. Consequently, the status of the present leader, a man in his late forties, may have been acquired more through the lack of meaningful challengers than because of the possession of strong positive features. However, his authority is recognized in all spheres of social life. He himself commented to me that the extreme complexity of land tenure in parts of the lower Kendall River, especially on or near the river, is the result of close intermarriage between the various estate corporations. This explanation is plausible for, by positing a high interlocking of familial ties,

it accounts for the formalization of ownership of discrete features within camp-sites (and thus the breakdown of notions of exclusive ownership) through the maintenance of patterns of use (including residence) over time.

There are three linked corporations on the lower river: KN1, KS2 and KS4 ("Rat"). In linguistic terms, the first is Wik-Ngathana, and the last two are Kugu-Muminh.

There is little evidence to indicate former patterns of interaction between the upper and the lower river. Inland, the Kendall River supported a number of estates. This contrasts strongly with the situation on the upper "Christmas Creek", or the "Holroyd" or "Thuuk" Rivers. These each supported two estates at most. The Kendall River constitutes a much larger system, and it is possible that the estates of the interior were able to enter into a largely self-sufficient "company" relationship of the type described for the lower rivers. Inland, the situation on the Kendall River was disturbed early in the century by the encroachment of the pastoral frontier. Members of the inland estates are still typically engaged in the cattle industry; and many of them live in Coen. Nevertheless, knowledge of their social identity - e.g., kam waya, awu, personal names, etc., - is well known on the coast, even as far afield as "Christmas Creek".

While I have concentrated thus far on describing "company" relationships based on riverine systems, informants are also careful to point out that "company" relationships may be established both between systems and across an intervening system. Interactions set up on the basis of distant marriages contracted within the wider

Kugu-Nganychara region may constitute the basis of a "company" relationship. This relationship may become relatively enduring or intense if a number of marriages is contracted between the same pair of estates. In this way, individuals may know more about their spouse's estate or their mother's estate than about their own. To give an example, X5 enjoys a strong "company" relationship with T2:

> Mother's family; they make company with us.
> Son, daughter ... we make company same way
> with mother's people (i.e., with mother's agnates),
> wa'awa thugu ("Thuuk River").

I wish now to return to a question posed in the previous chapter: Why should particular ceremonies focus on particular sites? Perhaps we can now suggest some of the reasons. Firstly, the sites must provide an adequate resource base. There are probably a number of sites which would fall into this category; however, I have argued that river mouths probably provide the most favoured locations. This argument serves to account for the location of the wanam ceremonial ground at the mouth of the "Holroyd"; and also the pilam centre at ithang, on Moonkan Creek, and the intensity of ceremonial life on the lower Kendall River (as opposed to the upper river, or the coast away from the river). Even the winychinam centre at winychinam-umu at the mouth of the "Thuuk River") may be explained in these terms. Moreover, the argument may be modified easily to account for the locations at which munka and kunalam are performed. I have already stressed that mutha-awula - piching - thugu (for munka) and yangku (for kunalam) are well-watered sites near the coast with major access routes to the land, and abundant vegetable supplies. It is also interesting, in this connexion, to note that the division of the landscape during the munka ceremony is stated to be identical to that practised during wanam. The same may also have been true

The sites mentioned all fall into the category of focal sites (with the exception of winychinam-umu, where, in any case, no ceremony has been performed in living memory). According to my argument, focal sites represent points which are strategic for one or more reasons, and become the camp-sites of "big men". Each estate represents a bid for independence. Sometimes the historical facts underlying these bids may be lost, but at least some of the processes are determinable: the seizure of a track and/or site by a forceful individual; the aggregation of a residential group around an individual who has a number of descendants, or because he is popular; the refusal of an old and respected man to move from a favourite camp-site, and so on. Certain sites work in the favour of the resident "big man" or "boss" for they themselves are more favoured for residential purposes than other sites, or because they have acquired a long and prestigeful history. In general, I argue that there will be a general movement of the most powerful individuals and estate corporations towards control of these sites.

The major ceremonies express two important themes, firstly, the creative energy of certain 'founding fathers' laying down a body of knowledge for future generations; and, secondly, the dependence of the many on the few, and vice versa. The major coastal ceremonies bear the stamp of personality cults; and the 'founding father(s)' are identified with the site at which the ceremony is performed, and through it, with the people who own or control it. It is not difficult to see these 'founding fathers' as the "field bosses" of the past. Their status (and the short- and long-term survival of the ceremony they established) depended then, as now, on their capacity to draw others to them, or, expressing it differently,

to serve as the pivots of social action.

Moreover, their status is projected into the future, either because they serve as models to be emulated, or because their status accrues to those who currently stand in their place. The "boss" of a ceremonial site will be "boss" of the ceremony, regardless of whether he can participate meaningfully in it or not. However, if the titular "boss" is not also the effective leader, the ceremony is likely to wane in popularity, or fall into the hands of others. However, these processes take time.

Meanwhile, new prominent men may emerge. Although it is likely that they, too, will become 'founding fathers', the conversion of their social advancement to enduring cultural forms (stories, songs, dances, awu) will lag behind. In short, there is a gap between social process and its cultural interpretation or what I might wish to call its 'monumentalization'. Ceremonies are monuments to "big men"; but they come only in the wake of their actual achievements.

This argument may help to account for the absence of a major ceremony at waalang, despite the fact that the current "boss" of estate X5, in which this site is located, and his FB- (and only serious rival) from the other side of the river, are the two most powerful men in the whole Kugu-Nganychara region. Given their current political ascendancy, it would be easy to suggest that cults would arise around one or the other of these powerful men, probably focused on or about waalang. This suggestion would not be entirely conjectural, nor geared entirely to a pre-European situation, for, as I noted in the previous chapter, there has been a re-activation of payncha kor'am, the "Brolga dance", closely identified with and

sponsored by the "boss" of X5. In the past this dance form almost certainly had full ceremonial status. It is located at agu manu-umu, inland from waalang. While this does not resolve the precise issue of the absence of a ceremony at waalang itself, it is worth noting that there was almost certainly another ceremony located at one time at manu-pachinga, just to the south of waalang. The configurations of a dance ground of the munka-type are still clearly visible. The mytho-historical account that the ceremonial ground was constructed only to be by-passed by the intended participants (see the discussion in Chapter 10) may simply reflect a diminution of the political effectiveness of its organizer(s), and a waning of the ceremony's popularity. The mytho-historical account identifies the organizer as "Diver". It is worth noting that the latter is one of the principal kam waya of estate X2, and it is tempting to postulate the shift of this corporation away from waalang at some time in the past. Coupled with the current political marginality of estate X2 (expressed publicly as the "different-different" quality of its language, Kugu-Mangk, but perceived more concretely in its loss of effective control over kunalam), the disappearance of the "Diver"-created ceremony perhaps completes a neat picture.

Of course, alternative explanations are available. One is that a range of political and social options are available even for the most powerful individuals. Although it would create a tidy universe if every "big man" had his own ceremony attached to a "big place" in his own "country", particular "big men" will almost always confront an untidy universe created by the flow of history. Individual aspirations may move in the direction of realizing simple formulae or equations of the type enunciated just now, but almost always they will be thwarted by other pressures -

demographic, environmental, social, the power of precedent, and the purely contingent. They may choose instead to make the best of what there is. In this respect it is interesting to note the position of these two powerful figures (the "bosses" of X5 and X6) within the context of the wanam ceremony. Although the latter is located within an entirely different riverine system, they are nevertheless the leading figures. One is the leading dancer; the other is the leading singer, as well as being a famous dancer. Their dancing techniques are almost diametrically opposed, yet both have their admirers and their fervent imitators. The traditions created by the kaha-(k)ungken brothers thus become their traditions.

On the surface, Kugu-Nganychara social organization lacks readily identifiable units. Certainly there are families to which various individuals are attached on a short- or a long-term basis. Moreover, there are named groupings. The latter, however, are hardly ever directly observable in social action. They are categories rather than social groups. Rules are made only to be broken. Marriages are contracted which rupture almost all possible constraints. And in matters of belief and knowledge there is no apparent orthodoxy. For any particular story, everyone has the correct version; and they all differ.

This superficial vision accords well with a situation in which each man stresses his right to be heard, and his right to independent action. Even the kinship system places only a hazy constraint on the exercise of these personal rights. Sons fight with their fathers; children abuse their mothers; and boys

steal from their "small uncles", despite the dictates of the 'system'. Even in economic matters, individuals enjoy a great freedom of choice, following personal food preferences and favoured techniques in hunting, gathering, or in preparing and cooking. When conflict arises people may simply "walk out", moving to a more congenial situation. Thus, far from being cogs in a machine aimed at ensuring the maximum benefits for everyone, individuals can seem self-seeking. The only regulating factors are fear, based on threats of violence, or on sorcery, out-and-out refusals, timidity, and economic or sexual dependency.

I have deliberately overstated these features in order to deflect attention away from the notion of a mechanistic kinship system, almost inevitably applied to Aboriginal social life. However, having stated this, it is tempting to follow Sharp and to deny that there is any identifiable 'society' as such, and to study systematically the physical, social and conceptual universe occupied by each individual. Such a procedure is obviously impossible. In any case, it would lead to a set of particularistic accounts, largely unamenable to analysis and of little anthropological utility.

There is no doubt that Kugu-Nganychara 'society' is characterized by a high degree of individuation. Only close same-sex siblings are likely to share the same identity-set: language, kam waya, awu, names, age-grade, ceremonial affiliation, song and dance repertoire, etc. Even then their acquired knowledge, particularly in ritual matters, and their achieved status based on hunting, fighting and other skills, is likely to vary considerably. Moreover, even close siblings are placed in a hierarchical relationship to each other; and they may marry women from different "countries", speaking different

languages, and opening up different sets of options.

However, social life is not as random as it seems; and it is not necessary to abandon the study of wider social units entirely. It is important to note that, from one viewpoint, land systems and patterns of exploitation provide units which may be isolated and studied. These land systems not only involve patterns of exploitation; the latter themselves imply structured social relationships which defy analysis from a purely individualistic perspective.

From another viewpoint, it is possible to isolate certain individuals whose authority is recognized at both familial and supra-familial levels. While every individual has the right to air his or her views on all issues of moment, the "big man" speaks only after all others have spoken. His is literally the final word. While others speak, he is heard. Fights are a common, almost daily, occurrence; yet, he sits aloof and intervenes only as a final measure. The major decision-maker and instructor in matters of ceremony, he is also the arbiter of what constitutes correct or incorrect knowledge. To a large degree he can be seen as defining the social universe of a number of people, not only with respect to which people regularly interact with each other, but also in terms of what constitutes the 'official version' of stories, songs, dances, personal names, genealogies, languages, totemic affiliations, and land ownership.

A "big man" or "field boss" may have two or more spheres of influence. One I have described as the riverine COMPANY, based as much on proximity, resource dependency and cooperation in economic activities as on kinship ties. Others may be constituted initially

on the basis of kinship ties, e.g., principally through M or W, and reinforced through visiting, sharing of economic pursuits, acquired knowledge of land, and participation in ceremonies. Ties through such kin may serve to legitimize, for people of capacity, a leading role in even distant ceremonies, or in the internal affairs of a remote estate.

In the case of the essentially local sphere of influence, both viewpoints - one geared towards land systems, the other towards individual universes - come together. Simply, the "big man" becomes the pivotal member of a network which embraces, and, through the character of its linkages, defines, the resident and exploiting population. In the wider Kugu-Nganychara area there are a number of such local, leader-centred networks[1].

The other networks or spheres of influence will partially include, but cut across, these local networks. They cannot be related in any direct way to any land system as such. For this reason an understanding of their modes of operation can only be understood within the broader politico-economic framework which serves as their context, and through time.

For those who hope to achieve prominence, yet who do not

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1. I do not wish to indicate by this simple expression that the actual situation is equally simple. Clearly, a number of men and women may serve as subsidiary nodes in the network of relationships, and at two levels, one conceptual (e.g., as the specified land-owner), the other concrete (e.g., serving as effective aggregating points in the composition of residential groups). Moreover, it is to be expected that these nodal positions will stand in hierarchical relationships to each other. Furthermore, they will change over time in several respects: number, the people occupying the positions, and the degree of influence each wields within the total system.

have a "big man" as father, or, while meeting this condition, are junior siblings, there are several routes open. Generally these will lie, at least for a time, outside the riverine system. Though junior siblings located in politically weak lineages are unlikely to succeed to positions of authority in their own lifetime, except in the unlikely event of a successful campaign of violence, they can work to improve the political chances of their own children. They may decide to foster kinship (or other) ties with members of other systems where present or future prospects seem brighter. They will almost always find a local sponsor keen to further his or her own interests in the process. They can lead a life of relative independence in their own estate, attempting to carve out their own niche or waiting for their half-chance. They can become celebrated singers or dancers. They can forge links with a "big man", attaching themselves to his camp, and creating close family ties through marriage, either acquiring a sister or a daughter of the "boss" as wife, or providing a sister or a daughter as wife to the "boss".

These routes are not mutually exclusive. The successful power-broker is likely to pursue a number simultaneously, and wait for history to take its course. Violence, infertile marriages, and early deaths can all change the demographic picture and the political situation fairly rapidly. Failing health or the onset of senility in the "big boss" or family feuding can accelerate the process of change. The death of a prominent man can have an earth-shattering impact. Although his pet projects and moralistic pronouncements may take on the force of 'dying words', and serve to justify and inspire events and practices for decades to come, his death can alter the whole situation immediately and radically.

Social networks re-align. Older men may push the sons of the deceased to one side if the latter are younger, less significant in ritual matters, and cannot rally the support of other kin, particularly through uterine links. These men may seize effective control of a major (or perhaps the defining) camp-site within the riverine system, justifying such moves on the grounds of "company" interest ("We, like half-share from start"); shared kam waya ("We all one kam waya, one language, one name"); close family ties with the deceased ("We two from two grandfathers"); and age and prestige. While people say, "Big son should take over", actuality more often than not defies this statement of 'rule'. In short, Kugu-Nganychara practice demands that rules and actuality constitute separate fields of analysis.

PART III :

CONCLUSIONS - THE WIK REGION

Chapter 12 :

A Comparison of the Archer River and the Kugu-Nganychara regions

The intention of this chapter is to compare the Archer River region, as described by McConnel and Thomson, with the Kugu-Nganychara region, in an attempt to establish points of similarity and difference. There are a number of problems in conducting this comparison. Firstly, in the case of the Archer River, it is clear that we are dealing with only a single river system, and the available evidence supports the general notion that it sustained a number of local groups which interacted with each other at a relatively high level; in the case of the Kugu-Nganychara region, it is equally clear that we are dealing with, in fact, three major systems, viz., the Kendall River, the "Holroyd River", and "Christmas Creek", rather than one. As I have already commented, each of these "rivers" may be seen as supporting a relatively discrete population. My own view is that this is a problem of scale rather than of substance. Although I have pointed to examples of local variation, often arising out of individual initiative or choice, within what I have designated as the Kugu-Nganychara region, I am content that this region can indeed be treated as a whole. In short, it provides the living social context in which particular local variations can be perceived and even understood. This leads to the second, and more major difficulty posed by the comparison.

I have continually stressed the dichotomy made by the Kugu-Nganychara people between coast and inland. Looked at from another perspective, what this dichotomy signals in fact is a division which operates over a number of dimensions - environment, economy, territoriality, social life, and ideology. It also structures

social reality, in the short term and over time, internally within each division, and in the dealings of people of one division with people of the other division. The important point, for my present discussion, is that it would be impossible to understand the social life of the Kugu-Nganychara region by focusing narrowly on either the 'saltwater' or the 'freshwater' sections of the rivers. In short, interaction along an east-west axis, extending from the coast for a considerable distance inland, is an important component of Kugu-Nganychara social reality. The problem, clearly, is that neither Thomson nor McConnel relates the so-called Wik-Mungkana of the upper reaches of the Archer River estuary, and the middle reaches of the river itself, with the people who traditionally resided on the lower estuary and along the coast. Thomson (1972: 1) usefully notes that "In the Wik Monkan tribe, ... the clans impinging on the territory of the Kandju had more in common with the neighbouring Kandju clans, with whom they came into contact almost daily, than with members of their own tribe who belonged to distant clans living on the lower Archer River." On the same principle, it seems unlikely that the "clans living on the lower Archer River" did not have frequent dealings with the people living immediately to the west of them on the coast. (I shall return to this issue again in a moment.) The important general point is that this failure to treat the people of the lower estuary means that McConnel and Thomson are unable to provide any impression of the Archer River as a system.

A third difficulty also relates to questions of interaction, this time on a north-south axis. In the Kugu-Nganychara region I have stressed the fact that although, for certain purposes, each river system may be treated as in a sense discrete, there is also a high degree of social interaction between residents of each of the

river systems. This is particularly the case between contiguous rivers, e.g., the "Holroyd" and "Christmas Creek". However, it does not preclude a high level of contact (including inter-marriage) between non-contiguous rivers (notably the Kendall River and "Christmas Creek"); or, conversely, a low level of contact between residents of contiguous streams (e.g., between the people residing along "Christmas Creek" and the people south of "Breakfast Creek"). In short, there are patterns of social continuity and social discontinuity which cannot be predicted on the basis of easy or difficult mobility, or on the basis of any other environment-based factor. Environment alone does not have a determinate character in this respect. The researcher must look to social factors as well. For the Archer River neither McConnel nor Thomson comes to grips with real patterns of social interaction. The reader is simply asked to assume, with them, that a common language designates an isolable and distinct social field. It is for this reason, I suggest, that McConnel stresses, as she does, the major linguistic boundary along the northern edge of the Archer and Watson Rivers, separating Middle Paman from Northern Paman languages. She correlates this linguistic boundary with a major shift in social life (in particular, with respect to forms of marriage) and material culture. In short, the so-called Wik-Mungkana are said to have had no or little social contact across this boundary.

This may actually have been the case. However, it is clearly mistaken to confuse distinctions which may be made in linguistic, social or technological classifications with real divisions which occur in social interaction. Of course, differences in language, or social forms, or technology, may all serve to mark off distinctive social groups; but these differences may well be called

into play within ongoing interactional contexts, as much as serve to inhibit 'communication'.

In this respect it is interesting to examine the linguistic picture in the two regions. For the Kugu-Nganychara area, there is high linguistic diversity on the lower reaches of each of the rivers, and low diversity along the freshwater reaches. On the lower Kendall River, the following languages/dialects are spoken: Wik-Ngathara, Wik-Ngathana, and Wik-Me'anha (north of the river); and Kugu-Ugbanh, Kugu-Muminh and Kugu-Uwanh (to the south). Upstream all local groups affiliate with Wik-Iiyanh. This is not to rule out the possibility of local variation within this particular dialect/language. On the lower "Thuuk River", both Kugu-Uwanh and Kugu-Muminh are spoken; again, upstream, only Wik-Iiyanh is spoken. Kugu-Ugbanh, Kugu-Mangk, Kugu-Mu'inh and Kugu-Muminh are all spoken on the lower "Holroyd"; upstream the "Holroyd" is exclusively Wik-Iiyanh. Finally, Kugu-Mu'inh, Kugu-Mangk, and Kugu-Muminh are the languages/dialects of the lower "Christmas Creek"; upstream Wik-Iiyanh is again spoken. Here it fades into Pakanh. However, the latter appears to be a closely related language/ dialect to Wik-Iiyanh.

The Archer River provides a strikingly parallel situation if we consider the lower river in conjunction with the middle reaches. Along the coast between the Love River and Ina Creek (16 km. to the south of the Archer River mouth, and about 18 km. to the north of the mouth respectively) the following languages/dialects are reported: Linngithigh, Anyjinngith, Ay.ngenych, Wik-Paacha, and Wik-Thinta. Some of these may be the same language/dialect (See Appendix A, especially entries under Wik-Paacha and Wik-Thinta). Nevertheless, it appears that the coastal strip is here, as it is

further south, characterized by a high level of linguistic diversity. This again compares with a low level of linguistic diversity inland. Wik-Ompom is reported for the middle reaches of the Watson River (in fact, for only a single local group listed in McConnel's data, viz., local group I - see Appendix B); and Wik-Mungkana is reported for all local groups located along the middle reaches of the Archer River. These data are even more suggestive given the close relationship which exists between Wik-Mungkana and Wik-Iiyanh; and the fact that Ay.ngenych spoken south of the Archer River, probably belongs to the Northern Paman group of languages. Two points need to be made in connexion with these observations. Firstly, although Wik-Mungkana, Wik-Iiyanh and perhaps Pakanh are closely related languages/dialects, and stretch for something like 200 km., from the Archer River to south of the Edward River, there is no evidence that speakers of Wik-Mungkana, in the north, ever interacted with speakers of Pakanh in the extreme south. Nowadays, Thaayorre-speakers resident at Edward River have little difficulty understanding Wik-Mungkana as spoken at Aurukun. This is undoubtedly because of their exposure to Wik-Iiyanh in the context of Edward River settlement, and, possibly, to both Wik-Iiyanh and Pakanh prior to the formation of the Edward River mission in the late 1930s. However, by the same token, no Thaayorre-speaker could hope to understand the languages/dialects spoken at the mouth of the Archer River. The same would apply to speakers of any of the languages/dialects found at the mouth of the Kendall River. Presumably, if a person from the mouth of the Archer River had come into contact with a person from the mouth of the Kendall River, the two of them could speak and be understood in Wik-Mungkana and Wik-Iiyanh respectively. This opens up the possibility that Wik-Mungkana - Wik-Iiyanh served as a lingua franca for people who lived long distances apart and who rarely, if ever,

came into contact with each other. Certainly, languages/dialects distributed along the coast become mutually unintelligible over relatively short distances (suggesting more or less closed social universes). Against these rather conjectural remarks, it must be stated that my general conclusion, based on long familiarity with the area, is that closely-related languages do not imply closely-related social groups, certainly not from any synchronic perspective. The same point is made, but from the opposite direction, if we assume that people on the lower Archer River interacted at a more or less high level with at least some speakers of Wik-Mungkana on the middle reaches of the river. In these circumstances, not only would any social gathering have brought together speakers of multiple languages/dialects, but these languages/dialects would, in many if not all cases, have belonged to two very different linguistic classifications, i.e., as separate sub-groups of the Paman group of languages.

In all respects the physiography of the two regions shows a high degree of similarity. The same is also largely true of the range of environments and of their general disposition. In terms of physiography, the most conspicuous difference is one of scale. The Archer River is a major stream. Its estuary where it is joined by the Watson River from the north-east and the Ward River from the north is a vast and complex expanse of water, with many islands and fringed by quite extensive mangrove communities. It serves as a major obstacle to north-south travel. The rivers of the Kugu-Nganychara region are minor streams by comparison. None of them supports large mangrove communities; and none, with the exception of the lower reaches of the Kendall River, creates any real impediment to north-

south travel. Even then, the Kendall can easily be negotiated at a single crossing. The Archer River, by contrast, involves multiple crossings (e.g., island-hopping across the Archer River; then across the Watson River; and then, to get to the northern coastline, across the Ward River).

The Archer-Watson Rivers, and the Kendall River, share one conspicuous feature in common. During the dry season, they are tidal for considerable distances inland, pushing salt water well to the east of the "bloodwood" line. Nonetheless, the point of division between coast and inland, at least in social terms, remains remarkably constant for both regions. The most westerly inland group on the Archer River can look out to sea from its estate. Correspondingly, the inland groups in the Kugu-Nganychara region can look across the coastal plain to the coastal dunes, including at various points the coastal foredune. In short, the division between coast and inland cannot be drawn neatly on a salt water-fresh water dichotomy. It is correlated more with the sudden reduction in the range of plant environments which are available to the east of the "bloodwood" line.

Upstream the Archer River consists of a number of more or less well-defined streams, subject to heavy inundation during the wet season. In the dry season, although the river may cease to flow, there is an abundance of fresh water, both in lagoons located off the main river, or within the main channel(s) of the river itself. In the KNg region, the streams are rather variable in character. While the "Main Kendall" maintains a permanent flow, the "South Kendall" does not; and while the "Holroyd" consists of a virtually continuous line of lagoons, "Christmas Creek" has

a discontinuous character, with many large but separate lagoons. These sub-regional differences are reflected in differences in residential patterns and, to a degree, hunting strategies. However, these differences are not so great that they could serve to distinguish meaningfully between the two regions. In fact, the KNg region could perhaps be interpreted as showing greater differences between any two of its river systems, than between any one of them and the Archer River.

North of the Archer River the landscape rises to a higher elevation than elsewhere and there are shifts in soils and in vegetation. However, this higher area, properly speaking, falls outside the Wik region. There are no doubt differences in soils and vegetation between the Archer River region and the KNg region; however, they are nowhere as great as represented by the shift, just discussed, north of the Archer River.

To conclude: the physiography of the two regions, both on the coast and inland, can be taken as broadly the same. If there are significant differences, they are in terms of scale (the Archer River is a much larger river than any other river in the Wik region) and diversity (there are more sub-regional differences in the KNg zone than on the Archer River). Their impact on human inhabitants could be expected to be observed in the form of a reliance on water craft in the Archer River region (well attested in the literature) and a high number of specific techniques and responses, geared towards particular locations in the KNg region (certainly in line with my impressions).

With respect to plant environments, the two regions are

broadly similar. As established in Chapter 8, Thomson's classification of distinctive habitats, based largely on the Archer River, very much parallels classifications available for the KNg region. Pedley and Isbell isolate a major plant community for the latter which is not found on the Archer River, viz., low open-woodland, with Melaleuca viridiflora and Petalostigma banksii. They list grassland as an identifiable community; and, though it is lacking from Thomson's classification, it can nevertheless be usefully applied to the coastal division of the Archer River. Both accounts - viz., Thomson's, and Pedley and Isbell's - omit an important environment and the plant community associated with it. It occurs in both regions, though Stanton describes it only for the "Holroyd" - "Christmas Creek" region, viz., the sandy ridge which marks the eastern margin of the coastal plain[1].

One of the effects of the water which seasonally sweeps down the major rivers is that it tends to blur the sharp dividing line which otherwise marks the division between coast and inland. Where it is best developed, for example, at the "Holroyd" River, this dividing line consists, in fact, of a number of finely-differentiated zones which shift rapidly from one to the other: coastal plain,

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1. This sandy ridge is a prominent feature of the KNg region and can scarcely be overlook on aerial photographs. From surveys conducted on the ground (and easily confirmed from aerial photographs) I can assert that the same feature occurs at the Archer River. It begins on the south bank of the river at kätRa, immediately opposite Sidney Island. It supports at this point a dense patch of vine-forest. Further south, away from the river, Bamboo Station is built on what here has become a wide band of ridges. Nearby, enclosed in these ridges, is taprang, the swamp or lagoon famous throughout the region and at least as far south as Edward River as a source of bamboo spear-shafts, and mentioned in the kunalam myth (recorded in Chapter 10).

   The sandy ridge recurs intermittently all the way south to the Kendall River, but it is not the continuously conspicuous feature of the landscape which it is south of this river.

ridge (sometimes with a small lagoon on either margin, or perched within it), sandy corridor, band of 'low open-woodland', and finally, "bloodwood" ridge.

In the vicinity of the large rivers, these various zones are obliterated. The countryside proceeds directly from ridge to heavily water-swept plain. This is particularly true of the Kendall River where the sandy ridge is not to be observed for several kilometres on either side of the main river. This is not true of the Archer River in quite the same way; but the result is similar. Where the rivers of the KNg region, with the exception of the Kendall, pass through the ridge, there are well-developed swamps or lagoons. Unlike the Archer River or the Kendall, these bodies of water mark the inland penetration of salt water. In short, in these cases the inland-coastal, "bloodwood" - "beach-side", and fresh water-salt water dichotomies coincide. It is also worth noting that these swamps or lagoons at the point of contact between the two divisions provide favoured bases for the exploitation of the wide range of environments located nearby. At a roughly equivalent distance from the coast, koka and ngaka thongk.n lagoons off the main body of the Kendall provide abundant fresh water, fish, and waterlilies; yet, they do not provide such ready access to a range of different environments in the same way as the sites located on the "Holroyd", e.g., thoke, or thupi-ijiy. The Archer River has associated with it the swamps near Bamboo Station. However, apart from them, there appear to be few favoured dry season sites on the coastal plain, or at the interface between coast and inland, especially bearing in mind the deep penetration of salt water up the river at this time of the year.

The coastal dune system south of the Archer River (between yaan.ng and the Love River) is the subject of no special comments by Thomson or McConnel. However, until further research is able to demonstrate that this view should be modified, it can be taken that it exhibits basically the same features as the equivalent system south of the Kendall River, in terms of both structure and floristics. The 'dune woodland' systems which I have observed on the extensive dune system just north of the Archer River mouth are similar to those observed on the "Holroyd" and elsewhere. A discernible difference is that they are less elevated and thus retain less water in the dry season than the dune systems further south.

Given that by and large the two regions provide the same range of habitats, it is perhaps not surprising that people from the KNg region detect few differences in the life-forms found on the Archer River to those to which they are accustomed in their own region of origin. There are some variations in species. For example, the "bonefish", the centre of a major cult on the Archer River (see Chapter 13; and Appendix B), is said not to occur south of the Archer, though it may be obtained to the north - at ikalath, Pera Head, Weipa, and so on. Dugong and turtle are readily observed in the Archer River estuary, and they may have been exploited in the past as indeed they are to-day, though details of techniques used, yields and seasonality are lacking for traditional times[1].

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1. It may be useful to note that although both regions fall into what I would describe as the brown water (or even, grey water) section of the Gulf - the blue water or clear section commencing a little north of the Archer River mouth - there are periods of the year when the waters of the Archer River estuary are very clear, especially in the early dry season. The same cannot be stated for the rivers of the KNg region. They always appear rather dark and murky. The Kendall River, especially, always appears to carry a heavy load of whitish sediment, which (cont.)

As reported in Chapter 8, dugong were rarely if ever observed, and probably never exploited, in the KNg area. Turtles, like turtle eggs, were gathered fortuitously off the beach. They were never speared or trapped in the water. Eels are reported from the Archer River, and although McConnel and Thomson do not record their exploitation for the Wik region, they are still fished in and around Coen by people who speak Kaanyju and Wik-Mungkana. People from the KNg region are apt to comment on this practice; at the same time, they deny that eels are available in any of the rivers of their region. Against this they claim that a "freshwater garfish" (Alligator gar), which does not occur in the Archer River, occurs in the "Holroyd" and other streams of their region.

While the important species in terms of consumption are the same for both regions, there are some differences in avifauna. Perhaps the most notable is the Palm cockatoo, reasonably common on the Archer River, but rare further south. The presence of this bird on the Archer River is associated with the gallery forests which line the river. These may be more extensive and contain more vine-forest elements than gallery forests on the Kendall River or other streams further south. The Kendall River is noted for gallery-forests which are Melaleuca-dominated. Pockets of vine-forest occur, both inland and on the coast, but they are discontinuous in character. On the Archer River, the gallery-forests are sufficiently continuous to allow the penetration of Cuscus almost to the coast. The latter is not found in the KNg region. Informants also indicate that there are some plants (mostly vine-forest species) which are not found south of the Archer River.

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1. (cont). is deposited on the leaves and branches of the mangroves as the tide recedes. Such factors have an important impact on hunting techniques, and probably even on species availability.

They include a tree which bears a white drupe (mayi po'ama, unidentified). However, with one or two minor exceptions, the range of vegetable foods is the same for the two regions. Of course, this is not to ignore possible differences in populations and population densities. These can only be established by further research. At this point it is only possible to indicate that basically the same plant and animal foods are available.

Seasonality affects both the number of species and the size of populations of species available to human exploiters. However, seasonal pressures appear to be almost identical for both areas. Thomson records terms in Wik-Mungkana for topographic features and plant communities for which it is easy to obtain equivalent terms in the KNg languages/dialects. The same is true for seasons. People of the KNg region list several terms which Thomson did not record. However, it is possible, even likely, that these simply represent gaps in his data. Confirming this view it can be indicated that my KNg informants have offered what they see as the equivalent WM words.

Objectively, meteorological data are virtually identical for the two regions. This is true across all dimensions: rainfall, temperature, humidity, rates of evaporation, patterns of water-flow, and so on. If there are differences, they are clinal only. The Archer River is marginally hotter and wetter than the KNg region; and has slightly higher rates of evaporation and water-flow.

However, the latter raises what may, in fact, be a significant difference, viz., flooding. The difference is one of scale, not of kind. Figures included in Chapter 8 show that the peaks and lows

of the Archer River match closely those recorded for the KNg streams. However, the gross volume of water pouring down the Archer River during periods of the wet season exceeds, many times over, that recorded for the Holroyd River (i.e., the "South Kendall River"). The Kendall River, simply because of its shorter length, also must carry a smaller volume. Thus the Archer River basin is subject to much heavier and more concentrated flooding than any of the KNg streams. Unfortunately, little is known about the ways in which the Archer River people coped with the pressure of flooding; and my own research reveals little evidence of strategies adopted in the KNg region, apart from evacuation to the coast.

In broad environmental terms, the Archer River presents a rather 'coarser' picture than the KNg region. Movement from one set of environments to the next generally involves greater distances than in the more southern region. Problems of distance are also exacerbated by the relatively greater problems of mobility posed in the Archer River region, either by flooding during the wet season, or the difficulties of negotiating the lower reaches of the estuary (and wider sections of the middle reaches of the river) during the dry. These latter disadvantages may be partially outweighed by the benefits which a large estuary undoubtedly offers: a vastly extended shoreline (possibly, as great <u>within</u> the Archer River estuary as available along the whole coastline between the Kendall River and "Christmas Creek") from which fish, flying-foxes, aquatic birds, snakes, goannas, crustacea and shellfish may be extracted, as well as certain raw materials (e.g., spear-shafts, canoe-paddles, firewood). These advantages may accrue only to people owning land in the coastal division, especially if there is no coast-inland pattern of visiting.

This question leads more directly to economic considerations. McConnel and Thomson failed to distinguish between a coastal and an inland economy, yet this distinction is important for understanding all aspects of life in the KNg region. It is impossible not to suggest that the two economies existed alongside each other on the Archer River. The consequences of their failure to identify these economies have already been spelt out at length (see Chapters 3, 8), and at the beginning of the present chapter.

Both ethnographers tended to combine all economic activities under the single rubric, Wik-Mungkana. It is tempting to argue that they considered this procedure legitimate in that everyone they encountered in their travels exploited the same resources, used the same techniques, used the same extractive implements, followed the same rules and patterns of food distribution, and so on. In short, from their experience, it seemed legitimate to talk freely of the Archer River and other areas of the Wik region without distinguishing clearly between them. As noted in Chapter 3, McConnel proceeded consciously in this way in her description of material culture. The Archer River, Kendall River and the Holroyd River (either as "South Kendall" or "Holroyd" is not clear) are grouped together as indistinguishable. Strictly speaking, her assumption was not correct. There are some regional differences, mostly of a slight distributional or stylistic order (e.g., in the manufacture of dilly-bags). However, there are some more conspicuous differences, e.g., the use of boomerangs (more perhaps in ritual matters and fighting than for hunting) in the KNg region, and a knowledge of shields (associated with the use of fighting sticks). These items appear relatively unknown, and were seldom if ever manufactured north of the Kendall River. In this connexion, it is worth noting that

bark canoes, which Thomson places only on or north of the Kendall River, were employed on all streams in the KNg region. Informants record their use at Moonkan Creek, waalang, and the mouth of the "Holroyd", as well as on the Kendall River. More especially, they note their use on the lagoons of the upper "Holroyd."[1]

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1. In relation to bark canoes, it is notable that McConnel and Thomson habitually link their use with the spearing of "bonefish", a nocturnal and highly seasonal activity.

   Almost certainly canoes were used for hunting other fish, in the same way that to-day men patrol the Archer River estuary from the prows of dinghies, seeking out barramundi, mullet, stingrays, and other species.

   Thomson is generally sketchy in his treatment of marine resources and the exploitative techniques allied with them. It is perhaps because the "Wik-Mungkana" lacked the complex paraphernalia associated with dugong hunting found among the Umpila and other people of the east coast of the Peninsula. His and McConnel's failure to refer specifically to fishing techniques other than simply to the reliance on water craft (for a particular species) may mean that these other techniques were either absent from the Archer River, or were less frequently employed, or less developed, than among the people of the KNg region. It might be argued that the estuarine conditions of the Archer River may have lent themselves more to water-borne fishing techniques than to these other techniques. One factor may have been the relative inaccessibility of the shoreline, often shrouded behind banks of mangroves. In this connexion, it should be noted that landing points were carved out from the mangroves at various points in Archer Bay. They may be mapped. In fact, many are still in use.

   It should be pointed out that many of the other techniques were geared to wet season conditions on the salt pans and the coastal plains. These environments are extensive just to the south of the Archer River. One would need evidence that these environments were not exploited similarly to those in the KNg region before the argument presented should be given too much weight.

   As a subsidiary issue, it can be reported that dug-out canoes were introduced very successfully into Aurukun after mission contact by Aboriginal settlers from Weipa, or from "Weipa-side", i.e., from the coast north of Aurukun. Early photographs (from the 1930s) show numbers of both dug-out and bark canoes at the Aurukun Landing. The former could carry more people and were probably better adapted to hunting large game such as dugong and turtle than the traditional craft. Their relative merits in the pursuit of smaller game have yet to be determined. (cont.)

Similarly, hunting techniques appear almost, if not, identical for the two regions. Certain techniques are not recorded for the Archer River: e.g., the use of rods in fishing, fish traps, etc. These may simply be gaps in the ethnographic record. It is notable that none of the techniques recorded for the Archer River (and the same applies to items of material culture, including "messmate torches" which are habitually associated in the literature with the spearing of bonefish), is unrecorded south of the Kendall.

In the basic aspects of economic life, both the Archer River and the KNg region seem to fit a general Australian pattern:

1. The basic unit of production and consumption is the household, comprising the nuclear family at its core.
2. There is a relatively marked division of labour on the basis of sex, though in both regions the division does not appear to be sharply drawn.
3. As already noted, there is a basic repertoire of items of material culture for the two regions; cooking techniques and many of the hunting and gathering techniques are identical.
4. Exploitative techniques are adapted to seasonal requirements and resource abundances and shortages.
5. There are recordings of what might be described as environmental management or improvement. McConnel provides records of the re-planting of yams. In my own research I have observed cases of trees which have germinated on the coast being taken inland and planted in favourable locations near major camp-sites.

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1. (cont) From Aurukun, dug-out canoes were adopted by people living in the bush, and were used as far south as Moonkan Creek. They were definitely manufactured at this time in the KNg area.

There are certain gaps in the Archer River data. For example, there is no information on the division of labour on the basis of age. Moreover, there is no discussion of specialization, either in terms of resources (or items of material culture), or techniques. There is no indication of personal preference or its effect on economic life or individual behaviour. Thomson and McConnel give the impression of a set of orthodox and regular procedures. While this viewpoint has merit, for otherwise it would be difficult to account for the standardized repertoire of exploitative tools and techniques, it gives no sense of the high degree of personal choice exercised by the people of the KNg region, or of the personalisation of items made by any individual. There are no data from the Archer River on non-food resources, including the general topic of opar, or 'medicine'[1].

My general conclusion is that there are no major difference between the two regions in terms of environment and economy, at least on the basis of the evidence available. This is not to deny differences of scale. The Archer River is a large river; it places pressures on the general environment, and on its human and other inhabitants, through its annual heavy flooding. The nature and extent of these pressures have yet to be determined; and the human response recorded and analysed. Having determined these facts, the findings will no doubt also stand for the Kendall River, though on a somewhat reduced scale; and, even further reduced, for the KNg region as a whole. What may be more crucial for a comparison of the two regions in terms of environment and economy may be the determination of the coastal situation. Data are badly

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1. In this connexion it is worth commenting that the WM term is virtually identical to the term employed in the KNg region, viz., yuka opara.

lacking for the Archer River. However, even were it available, it would only represent a starting point, for, to parallel the situation observed in the KNg region, the relationship between the lower Archer and its neighbouring rivers would then have to be determined. The rivers to the south, notably the Love River and the Kirke, could be expected to bear some similarities to the Archer, though again scalar considerations would come into play. Looking north of the Archer, where there is a sudden and radical shift of environments (in crude terms, the inland division can be said to come to the sea), the situation is likely to be very different. Until these and related issues are clarified the comparison must remain incomplete and somewhat inconclusive.

The same applies to the issues of territoriality and local organization, for essentially the same reasons. Specifically, McConnel and Thomson pay little attention to the different nature and size of estates ranged along an east-west axis (i.e., running down from the upper reaches of the river to its mouth) or the patterning of the inter-relationships found between them, both along this axis and a north-south axis. Moreover, there is no detailed recording of the composition of residential groups. Such data are difficult to obtain, especially by word of mouth rather than by the direct observation of living social situations. Moreover, the analysis is likely to vary considerably according to the unit of study - e.g., the individual versus the 'clan', the estate versus the region. It will vary, too, whether one begins with the pattern of social relations, or with the land system. I shall return to this issue at the end of Chapter 14.

While comparison is difficult between the two regions on

the grounds just listed, the following general remarks can be made. Firstly, the broadly similar environments mean that the factors influencing the choice of camp-sites are likely to be little different. On this point, one additional comment can perhaps be made, viz., that along the main Archer River, crossing points may everywhere assume great importance as they do in certain parts of the KNg region (see Chapter 11). Secondly, a general comparison made between the two regions indicates that, inland, estates are uniformly large, and probably constitute discrete units. Certainly, neither comment holds for the coastal division of the KNg region.

For the KNg region I indicated that people make distinctions between sites on the basis of a number of factors: whether they are used as camp-sites or only as "dinner camps"; whether they are used irregularly or on a regular basis; whether they provide permanent water or not; the major resources which are available from them; and so on. These factors can be used for determining the relative importance of sites within the pattern of residence, land ownership and land use. It cannot be doubted that the same considerations are at work within the Archer River region. The fact that they remain unrecorded means simply that they represent gaps in the ethnographic record. The same no doubt applies to such notions as "poison country", agu mukam (unrestricted country), cremation sites, ceremonial grounds, and agu thanggun (see Chapter 9). McConnel is clearly aware of the notion of "company" (see the discussion of Marriage in Chapter 6). However, she does not record the corresponding notion of "company land"; and she introduces no notion of core or 'heartland' into her discussion of land ownership or "grounds". Birth-places and sites where people have died take on special significance among the people of the KNg region. However,

there is no evidence from the literature whether they are regarded in the same light on the Archer River.

McConnel links her discussion of awa (or 'increase sites') with totemic organization. I have kept the two firmly separated, for reasons which will become apparent in the next chapter, when this issue is treated in detail. However, in the meantime, two general comments may be made. Firstly, the people of the KNg region distinguish between items which have positive utility, and those which are regarded as being dangerous or harmful (including diseases and undesirable human characteristics, e.g., lustful or promiscuous behaviour). McConnel makes a similar distinction based perhaps, though not explicitly framed in these terms, on remarks made to her by Archer River people, or people from neighbouring regions. She distinguishes between items on the basis of positive or negative 'social value' (utility). She also links many of the awa explicitly with economic life. The people of the KNg region make the same link by allocating duties to men at certain awu and women at other awu. In both cases, the decision is made on the basis of whether the phenomenon relates to male economic activities, or to female economic activities. Secondly, the comment may also be made that although McConnel presents the activities performed at the 'increase centres' as being somewhat 'mysterious', it is likely that such activities on the Archer River are similar to those performed at the awu in the KNg region, and consist of appeals made directly to deceased ancestors.

Both Thomson and McConnel link residence with ownership, and argue that the main residential unit is based on the land-owning patri-clan. However, in the KNg region, residential groups always

appear to have exhibited a composite character consisting of both men and women with primary affiliations to other estates. This is true not only for the coastal division, but also for residential groups found inland. There are sufficient data contained in the early ethnographers' accounts to suggest that the same was also probably the case for the Archer River region. In all descriptions of social events - e.g., marriages, births, deaths, and, of course, ceremonies - people are recorded as present who must have come from other, sometimes distant, estates. My data, and that of Thomson and McConnel, agree on one major point, viz., that the core of the residential group consists of the land-owners. My own research indicates clearly that not all estates were occupied simultaneously. Some may have remained without occupants for considerable periods of time. By contrast, McConnel and Thomson assume that estates were always occupied. McConnel, especially, also assumes that the disappearance of members of particular estates is a recent phenomenon. This is not true for the KNg region; and, on the surface, there are no reasons to suggest why the Archer River should maintain enduring 'clans' when the KNg region does not[1]. In this connexion, it is worth noting that where estate corporations do disappear the evidence from the KNg region is that the transmission of the estate is very unlikely to be conducted on 'clan' grounds. For example, were estate B1 to disappear, there would only be a very remote possibility that it would fall into the hands of its linked estate corporation, KS5. A more likely procedure would be for someone to claim it through his M or some other non-agnatic kin tie.

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1. I return to this precise issue in Chapter 14.

In Tribes and totemism in north-east Australia, Sharp (1939) attempts to group "tribes" on the basis of "common features of totemic organization" (p. 255). He links the Wik-Mungkana, Wik-Iiyanh, Wik-Me'anha, Bakanh, Wik-Ngathana, Kugu-Nganychara (his Wik Ngantjera), Thaayorre and Yir-Yoront, among others, as belonging to a single type which he labels the "Yir Yoront Type" (Type V) (pp. 268). He writes:

> Among the tribes of this area are found named patrilineal moieties associated with a well developed totemic complex; there are no named sections. The patrilineal totemic clan is a strongly defined local group associated with multiple linked totems, which are not tabu, and an elaborate mythical ancestor cult (p. 268).

For the 'tribes' listed above, and some others, there are "rites to control totems"; the latter are "phenomena" drawn from "practically the entire universe"; and they are "divided between the various clans and the two moieties."

The hard data on which these remarks are made are drawn explicitly from McConnel for the Wik-Mungkana, and from Sharp's own writings, in the case of the Yir-Yoront (p. 268, note 18). For the other "tribes", it can only be assumed that the information comes from only these two sources - from McConnel, for Wik-Iiyanh, Wik-Me'anha and Wik-Ngathara; and from Sharp, for Thaayorre, Bakanh and Kugu-Nganychara[1]. In his summary, there is in fact almost no information which pertains directly to the Kugu-Nganychara. However, much of his data, reported from the Aiabakana and Aiakampana, bears strong similarities with information which I have reported in Chapter 10 and elsewhere for the KNg region. I shall allude to them where appropriate. I propose following the order of Sharp's discussion in some detail. However, before proceeding, it is important to understand what he means by the notions of clan and phratry, and

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1. It would be an interesting project, in the light of Sharp's classification, to extend the comparison, which is begun here, further south to take in the Thaayorre and Yir-Yoront.

the ways in which they relate to land ownership. For Sharp, the clan is totemic in character; i.e., it shares a number of what in Wik-Mungkana are referred to as puul waya (Sharp's pulwaia, p. 270). While McConnel and Thomson both promulgate the formula, one clan, one estate, Sharp (p. 271) writes that the clan "is normally associated with ... multiple named countries which need not be contiguous." He adds that these "countries" or estates "may be regarded as totems even though the generic term for totem is not usually applied to a country." The meaning of this remark is somewhat difficult to unravel. However, the general situation he wishes to explain appears to be similar to that which I have described for the KNg region, viz., the situation in which people who share 'totems' or kam waya are linked regardless of whether they belong to the same estate or not. I have referred to people linked in this way as belonging to "linked corporations", or "linked estates". Sharp would describe the following situation, viz., the linkage of B1 ("Barramundi"/Kugu-Mangk) with KS5 ("Barramundi"/Kugu-Uwanh), as representing two clans constituting a single named phratry (i.e., "Barramundi", or kugu-toho-toh). In this case, the two clans - employing Sharp's terminology for the moment - do not have common rights in land; they share 'totems' (kam waya), personal names, and certain behavioural correlates of their 'totemic' identification; and perhaps they participate in the same dance(s) within a ceremonial context (e.g., winychinam).

Another example might be the sharing of 'totems' and personal names between members of certain local groups on "Christmas Creek" and a Yir-Yoront clan of the lower Mitchell River. Each of these local groups or corporations might also be said to belong to a single named phratry, viz., kugu-yome ("Possum"). There are numbers of other cases ("Dead body", "Diver", "Stingray", etc.).

The relationship between the corporations which share the same 'totems' or kam waya on the lower "Christmas Creek" would appear to be different, if we confine our attention exclusively to the local situation. In short, I refer to each of the corporations which have "Possum" as their principal 'totem', and which all speak Kugu-yome. The coincidence of all 'totems' shared by these corporations is high; and in the case of X5, X6 and X4, it may be possible to document the segmentation of the 'clan estate'. However, this situation, while relating to what Sharp would describe as a single clan with discontinuous (or, in this case, semi-discontinuous) "countries", differs from it in at least one respect. One of the corporations enjoys political domination. Moreover, it claims exclusive ownership of certain sites, though it may acknowledge the secondary claims of the other corporations to the same sites (i.e., "That other mob (man) comes behind"). The other corporations, for their part, refuse to surrender their links with the 'heartland' of the dominant corporation, and may, in certain circumstances, acquire, or re-acquire, the major controlling influence over it. In some cases, the subsidiary corporation may not be able to claim major control over any 'heartland'.

In broad terms this is the situation which Sharp describes for the Yir-Yoront, but without specifying, in precise detail, the nature of the links of each lineage or 'sub-clan' with all sections of the 'clan estate'; and without raising the issue of hierarchical relations operating between clan segments.

Neither McConnel nor Thomson report phratry-organization for the Archer River region; or, even if we extend the boundaries somewhat, links (at a 'totemic' level) between 'clans' resident

on the Archer River, and clans located elsewhere. (On the basis of my own knowledge, it would be possible to link McConnel's local group X, "Ghost", with corporations T2 and HU1 in the KNg region; local group X1a ("Brolga") with corporations located on both the Kirke River and Knox Creek, and more distantly, Edward River; and so on. However, these links are rarely if ever brought into play)[1]. More importantly, there are no reports of discontinuous estates, and no indications of 'clan' segmentation. This situation appears to be basically similar to that found on the upper Kendall and "Holroyd" Rivers, and on the upper "Christmas Creek". In short, the inland division of the KNg region bears striking similarities with that section of the Archer River described by McConnel and Thomson; yet the coastal division seems much more closely akin to that described by Sharp for the Yir-Yoront. The coastal-inland dichotomy asserts itself in apparently different forms of social organization, as well as marking major shifts in environmental terms, and in terms of economy.

I wish now to return to Sharp's survey in detail. His claim that patrilineal moieties are characteristic of the 'tribes' assigned to his "Yir Yoront Type" perhaps needs modification in the light of the discussion in Chapters 6 and 11. The general situation is that while the moiety division is known to people on or near the coast in both the Archer River and KNg regions, it appears to have little local significance. My informant's remarks from the coastal

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1. While the Archer River 'clans' do not appear to utilize or even to refer to these linkages, this is not true further south on the coast. I have already noted in Chapter 10 how "Brolga" men from the Kirke River used links with "Brolga" men at Edward River to ensure themselves of accommodation when they went there for a Christmas "holiday". This is not an isolated case.

division of the KNg region may apply equally well to the Archer River region, viz., that moiety organization is "more hard law" inland. Sharp himself signals that the moiety division may generally have little regulatory function when he states that "Among some of the western tribes ... and perhaps elsewhere the moieties are not necessarily exogamous, many intra-moiety marriages being recorded (p. 270)." The "tribes" he refers to specifically include Thaayorre and Yir-Yoront. There is certainly no notion or practice of moiety exogamy among the people of the KNg region; and the situation recorded for the Archer River region remains inconclusive in this respect. Sharp also alludes to "moiety solidarity" expressed in "wrestling matches between distant male siblings." He appears here to refer to the ambanh.m ceremony, or ceremonies similar to it. It is notable that ambanh.m is associated with "bloodwood" country and the collection of honey. Sharp links the naming of moieties on the east coast of the Peninsula with honey; however, the link is also made with honey on the west coast (see the discussion in Chapter 11, pp. 411-2). Ambanh.m is unrecorded north of the Kendall River. However, this is not to say that it was not formerly practised on the Archer River. It is worth commenting, too, that despite the link with honey (and with various bodily characteristics - hair form, colour; length of penis; etc.) there is no formalised notion of moiety totemism for the KNg region. The same is probably true of the Archer River, where McConnel's indications are that totems may be assigned to moieties, but only as an extension of their prior assignation to clans or local groups. Thus there can be no restrictions placed on the eating of moiety totems in these regions. It is interesting to note Sharp's comment (p. 269-70) that, in some tribes, "There is a ritual desecration of ... [such] totems, followed by a mock combat between the men of

the moieties..." He refers, among others, specifically to the Aiakampana and Aiabakan (as well as to Thaayorre, Yir-Yoront, etc., to the south of the KNg region). The presence of this custom among Bakanh-speakers (and their close neighbours, the Aiakampana) confirms my KNG informant's remarks that the moiety division was important in the Bakanh area.

In both the Archer River and KNg regions each local group (clan, estate corporation) has a number of totems, thus confirming this aspect of Sharp's classification (viz., the requirement of "multiple totems", p. 270). In giving the various 'tribal' terms for 'totem', Sharp tends to focus (though not exclusively) on what I have characterized as the person - phenomenon (- ancestor) relationship, rather than the place - phenomenon relationship, though, in giving the WM term (his "*pulwaia*") he extends the equation to include "country" as well as "elements of own totemic complex" (p. 270). I have not encountered the first usage in precisely this form, though it occurs in expressions where people say "kam waya, just like country, brother for us". "Country" here can be seen to represent the notion of people tracing descent from one generation to the next, and the inter-relationship (and interaction) between the living and the dead. On these matters the Archer and the KNg region do not appear to present any disparity. Sharp's second expression, "elements of the totemic complex", seems vague and incomprehensible. He lists no KNg term.

For Wik-Mungkana (including Wik-Iiyanh) he also lists the term "*katwaia*, used for totems, countries, ancestors of mother's patrilineal line (p. 270)". Similar terms (e.g., kadhal waya) may be obtained from the coastal people of the KNg region.

Sharp records that "the totemic interpretation of dreams is universal in the area (p. 270)". Data from the KNg region confirm his comment; but they are lacking from the Archer River region. He also notes that, with one exception, there is no "general rule against killing or eating edible clan totems" (p. 271). Precise information on this question is again lacking from the Archer River, but Sharp's comments apply aptly to the KNg region. Moreover, my own data provide parallels to a remark made by a "Koko Moloroidji informant" from the opposite side of the Peninsula, viz., that "... he would kill any of his clan totems unless they appeared particularly friendly, tame, or easy to kill, their unusual behaviour requiring interpretation in reference to some fellow clansman, dead or alive, as in a dream (p. 271)". Perhaps this statement applies across a more general area than Sharp reports.

His remarks that 'totems' may be drawn from "non-faunal or non-floral" categories (p. 271) apply equally well to both the Archer River and KNg regions. There are no examples in the literature, or from my own research, which match his remarks that "the totems or countries particularly associated with a deceased individual must be avoided by certain of his surviving kin for the period of mourning (p. 271)". Nor does Sharp include the Wik-Mungkana (-Wik Iiyanh) and Kugu-Nganychara among the "tribes" from which this custom is recorded. For both regions Sharp's remark that "personal names are derived from one or more of the clan totems, countries, or ancestors (p. 271)" probably stands, although there are no cases I have been able to detect in the literature of names derived from "countries" (sites) on the Archer River[1].

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1. It is tempting, and no doubt legitimate, to see names from totems and names from ancestors as the same thing.

Sharp's classification becomes shakier when he attempts to associate "totems, countries, rites, and ancestors" with what he calls "totemic complexes" (p. 272). It is important here to note that Sharp links these "complexes" with clans, in the sense that they have been discussed earlier. The characteristics of these complexes are:

1. The presence of "sacred and profane accounts" which link the various elements of the complexes[1].
2. "Ceremonies for increasing or checking the supply of totems ... conducted by individuals only ... or by individuals and groups." Sharp adds: "... Among the Wik Munkan, Aiabakan, and Aiakampana the conductor of the ceremony, the locus of the site, and the totem to be controlled all apparently must belong to one clan."
3. Initiation ceremonies which involve "the representation of the more striking totems and ancestral events, members of the various clans acting the part of their own ancestors or totems (p. 273)".

In the KNg region there is no regular association of awu and kam waya. This would not constitute a problem in terms of Sharp's formulation if awu (representing the same phenomenon as one of one's kam waya) were found in land belonging to another segment of the clan land. But in many cases not even this relationship can be established, at least within the limits of the KNg region (see the discussion in the next chapter under the heading, Birds as kam waya and awu in the Kugu-Nganychara region). Moreover, Sharp

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1. In another passage, Sharp writes: "So far as is known, all totemic control sites are believed to have been established by the mythical ancestors, and they are frequently associated with water, stones, or unusual rock formations (p. 273)".

modifies his own remarks for the area immediately south of the KNg region (including Thaayorre and Yir-Yoront) when he writes (p. 273): "To the south, however ..., the owner of a site is responsible for the ceremony, but the totem may be of a different clan." In short, for this area, and for the KNg region as well, there is no necessary relationship between 'totem' and so-called 'totem-centre'. This contrasts markedly with the situation recorded from the Archer River.

Moreover, I noted in Chapter 10 that for the KNg region there are rarely if ever accounts, either "sacred" or "profane" to explain the presence of kam waya (except as assigned by outside human intervention), or to link them with 'increase centres' or other elements of the presumed complex. There are some major sagas (e.g., the travels of the kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers or the "Turtle" men", which explain the location of certain (but not all) awu, and with the creation of songs and dances, often concerned with events which occurred at various places. Sometimes these places have become awu, but not necessarily, e.g., the crow song and the oyster-catcher song from the wanam saga are linked with particular places, but there are no awu for either bird at these sites.

This again contrasts with the Archer River situation which proves in fact the 'ideal type' representation of Sharp's model of the "totemic complex": an 'increase centre' for every 'totem'; a story linking the centre with the 'totem'; a ritual performed by people who control the awa and have the eponymous puul waya as their 'totem'; and who perform dances within initiation ceremonies which record or symbolise the activities of what we might call these "local heroes", the clan ancestors.

In the KNg this ceremonial elaboration within the major initiation rites is lacking. Wanam, kunalam, munka - all draw their inspiration from sagas which link a number of estates (and social groups). In this sense, although each ceremony has a focus, viz., a fixed ceremonial ground, it is a corporate ceremony. It has an inclusive structure based on an inclusive mytho-historical account. On the Archer River, the major ceremony, winychinam, is not corporate in the same sense, because it stresses the independence of its participants. Their identity as members of particular 'totemic' units is stressed: "You are Bonefish; you are Sea-eagle; you are Wild dog; etc." The units are also clearly interdependent simply by the fact that they participate in a single ceremony. However, the unity is composite, not corporate. The winychinam ceremony almost certainly occurred in the past in the KNg region. Its disappearance may be coupled with the collapse of the 'totemic complex'. However, this strikes me as a false way of looking at the problem. Rather it may be that the 'totemic complex' and its attendant ceremony arise in particular circumstances. These may not obtain at all times or in all places.

At a more detailed level Sharp provides the WM. term *auwa*, meaning "control centres" (p. 272). He gives no KNg term, but lists the Bk term *taŋkun*. This appears to be the same term, thanggun (agu thanggun), recorded for the KNg region. Its occurrence in the Bakanh-speaking area as equivalent to WM. awa/Kng awu tends to confirm my view that the establishment of agu thanggun (by a person gaining control of the spirit of another person through sorcery) may be a preliminary step in the formation of an awu (see Chapter 9, pp. 306-7).

Sharp refers to *uthanam* (presumably uchanama) and *wintjanam* (winychinama) for the Wik-Mungkana (and Wik-Iiyanh) (p. 273). Apart from the minor point that the term uchanam is not applied south of the Kendall River, it is worth indicating that no ceremony is listed for the KNg region. Sharp records the term *putja* from his Aiakampana and Aiabakan "tribes" and makes reference to a ceremony by the same name among the Olkol (see note 32, p. 447). It is almost certainly equivalent to KNg pucha, the name of the ceremony located on the Kendall River[1].

With respect to spirit conception, Sharp notes that there is some variability of belief and practice. He writes (p. 274):

> Among the tribes of the south-west of the area ... it is believed that the spirit baby ... has existed from mythical ancestral times in the land where he happens to be found by a father or mother; he is therefore affiliated with the clan which owns this land, regardless of the clan affiliations of his real father. Normally, however, children are found in the clan territories of their real father and never outside the domain of some classificatory father. Among the Aiabakan and Aiakampana clan descent always follows the actual patrilineage: the spirit babies ... are usually found in the father's clan land, but may be found in land belonging to another clan within the real father's phratry.

My own data from the KNg region present a wider set of alternatives. While the argument may be supported that "children (i.e., their spirits) are there from start" (or alternatively are created by the spirits of deceased ancestors), it is the case that children may acquire their spirit from an awu in any estate. Normally this is the estate of the F or the M (see my discussion, pp. 360-3).

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1. Sharp (note 23, p. 273) links *putja* with a "mythical python and inter-tribal conflicts in the ancestral times". These references do not apply to the Kendall River ceremony.

There is no attempt made to involve linked corporations or to invoke phratry linkages in order to rationalize the situation.

The failure of Sharp to include the Wik-Mungkana in his discussion of spirit conception no doubt stems from the failure of Thomson and McConnel to treat it. However, he does turn to the "Wik Munkan" in his discussion of the fate of the spirit after death. Following McConnel he indicates that the spirit may return "at death to one of the clan totem centres (p. 274)". There is nothing said on this issue for the KNg, though I have argued that one spirit component is normally directed back to the "home" estate, frequently to an awu (see p. 397).

I do not propose treating other aspects of social life in detail. They have already been dealt with in the linked chapters, Chapters 5 and 9, and Chapters 6 and 11, respectively. In broad terms, the Archer River and the KNg region share many, perhaps most, features of social life. Differences which may appear on the surface to exist perhaps arise only as a result of ethnographic "styles". McConnel is concerned generally to locate the Archer River people in the framework of a pre-existent model developed elsewhere; Thomson showed a penchant (and a flair) for working through indigenous categories, and although a natural scientist by training, seemed to place more faith in the explanatory capacity of native models and concepts than on first-hand observation. My own approach has also been heavily reliant on local categories and concepts, informants' explanations, and textual material. Moreover, it has been difficult to escape, even partially, the pervasiveness of existing models. My own perceptions have been heavily influenced by being with certain important men, and seeing them work towards certain articulated

objectives: the renewal of ceremonial life, the formation of outstations, and so on. They have also been coloured by an awareness of the high degree of variability expressed in the practice of people's daily lives, and the maximization of individual options. These different perspectives are bound to produce different emphases, and different gaps.

The most conspicuous set of apparent differences affect so-called 'totemic organization', although were data available from the lower Archer River estuary relating to local organization, it is possible that the differences would cover a wider range of sociological questions. In this respect Sharp's typology raises interesting questions, for the structural differences which occur within the KNg region between the coastal and inland divisions oppose, on a wider scale, and in his terms, the Wik-Ngantjera (the Kugu-Nganychara of the coastal division) and the Thaayorre/Yir-Yoront, on the one hand, and the Wik-Iiyanh (the Kugu-Nganychara of the inland division) and the Wik-Mungkana, on the other. Leaving this to one side, several other questions remain. Firstly, do either McConnel or Thomson attempt to explain the differences. McConnel did bend her mind to the issue, and her explanations are examined in the next two chapters. Thomson passed the matter over, or was unaware of it. The second question is perhaps more serious: Do the isolable differences which exist between the two regions consist only of surface variations, or do they operate at a deeper structural level? I take up this issue in Chapter 13.

Chapter 13 :

Puul waya and awa - the Archer River "revisited"

Preamble:

In one brief passage, McConnel (1930: 188) writes: "The totemic cult of the Wik-munkan tribe appears to be more consistent than that of the coastal tribes." She does not elaborate on her remark; nor does she specify what she means by the notion of consistency in this context.

In a passage which almost immediately precedes the passage just cited, McConnel (1930: 188) comments: "The totemic cult of all the other Wik tribes is similar in the main essentials to that of the Wik-Munkan." To illustrate her point she draws on examples from what she calls the Wik-nantjara (Kugu-Nganychara, but not including Wik-Iiyanh), the Wik-natera (Wik-Ngathara), and the Wik-eppa (Wik-Epa), i.e., from three "tribes" located within the coastal division.

These two apparently contradictory statements set the major themes for the discussion which is to follow. As foreshadowed in earlier chapters, the major differences between the two regions, between the Archer River region and the KNg region (here including both coast and inland) lie in the broad area of what McConnel terms 'totemic organization'. To introduce a cautionary note, I should state that no Wik informant has ever suggested to me that there are radical differences in 'totemic organization' within the general Wik region. Indeed, people from the KNg region use the term kam waya and puul waya interchangeably; and the terms awa (WM) and awu (Ng) are so little different that the generality of the notion would

appear to be self-evident. Two questions are posed. Firstly, in what ways is totemic organization the same between the two regions, and in what ways does it differ? Secondly, and as a subsidiary issue: Is it useful, following McConnel, to see the differences which exist in terms of consistency?

Two other themes also come into play. One is suggested by McConnel's dichotomy between inland and coastal: Do the differences in fact operate on an inland versus coastal basis? The other is also broached in a tangential manner by McConnel, and represents a potential refinement of the contrast just proposed. She writes, in connexion with her earlier remarks (1930: 188):

> ... As I was able to acquire a more intimate knowledge of the Wik munkan I shall describe their culture in greater detail. In the vicinity of the cattle stations the information obtainable was fragmentary, but that gleaned in the more sheltered parts throws a light upon those totems whose traditions have been lost. From the fragments that remain it is possible to draw a picture of the totemic system as a whole and to grasp something of its meaning.

On the Archer River, the "more sheltered parts" were presumably on the lower river, in the lee of the mission at Aurukun, and the more disrupted areas lay upriver. How legitimate is it for McConnel to generalize from the lower river to the upper river (in particular) and to the Wik region (in general)?

Puul waya/kam waya and awa/awu - the Archer River and Kugu-Nganychara regions compared:

To compare McConnel's general account of totemic organization (derived from the Archer River, and given in outline in Chapter 5) with the situation found in the KNg region, it is necessary to consider the following points:

(1) McConnel argues that pulwaiya or clan-ancestors are associated with "story places", i.e., auwa, which are located within the clan estate (which McConnel calls the "local hunting-area"); among the Kugu-Nganychara, local corporations or estate corporations have a number of kam waya. The kam waya are often not formally linked with an eponymous awu, especially on the coast. For example, in the four "Possum" estates on "Christmas Creek" there is no minha yome-awu, or "Possum story place". Indeed there is no overlap at all between the list of over twenty kam waya attached to these estates, and the awu which occur within them. The same situation applies generally among the coastal Kugu-Nganychara.

(2) Neither McConnel nor Thomson appeared ever to encounter a situation in which a number of local groups or estate corporations shared the same puul waya. Compare this with the situation found in the KNg region and discussed in the previous chapter.

(3) There may be an argument for suggesting that local corporations which share kam waya constitute segments of a single clan. However, in the KNg region corporations linked in this way may not share all kam waya in common; or they may rank them in different order of priority. Moreover, the sharing of kam waya between corporations does not give one corporation automatic rights of access to "the hunting-area" of the other corporation, nor to its awu. In short, clan membership (if we wish to talk about the phenomenon of linked corporations in this way) does not entail rights over land, or, in particular, over awu.

(4) The evidence given by Kugu-Nganychara informants agrees with McConnel's comment that pulwaiya "vary in importance." However,

it sheds no light on her remark that they "vary in importance, not only within the clan itself, but within the tribe or group of tribes". Certainly it is true that some kam waya are better known than others, both within the corporation and by outsiders. McConnel may only be indicating this rather obvious fact; however, if it is the intention of her remarks to suggest that certain pulwaiya are per se more important than others, then the Kugu-Nganychara situation would stand in stark contrast, for the people affiliated with particular kam waya always value their own kam waya more than those belonging to others. Kam waya cannot be assigned an absolute status in the way that McConnel seems to suggest is possible.

(5) McConnel indicates that people derive their names from their pulwaiya. The range of pulwaiya from which names are derived is restricted, i.e., only certain pulwaiya are relevant. Among the Kugu-Nganychara the situation appears to be the same. However, two riders need to be attached to this statement of agreement. Firstly, personal names may be derived from place names as well as kam waya, though it is less common. Secondly, nhampa kurin, "navel names", are derived from kam waya, but normally from those of a different corporation (if, indeed, as I discussed in Chapter 10, actual names are given within the kuutana or "navel" relationship).

(6) McConnel employs the term "pulwaiya-cult". By this term she refers to a ceremony or a body of ritual associated with a particular puul waya. There are no cults, as such, associated with kam waya among the Kugu-Nganychara. Cults are associated with awu, not kam waya.

(7) To maintain a degree of comparability, it is probably legitimate to shift the focus from puul waya to awa in looking at cult activities

on the Archer River. McConnel would no doubt sanction this move, for she uses the two concepts, awa and puul waya, interchangeably (see the discussion in Chapter 4).

(8) In the Kugu-Nganychara situation, awu may be divided into a number of categories: (a) those at which major ceremonies are held; (b) those "left" by "stories"; (c) and those at which activities commonly called 'increase rites' may be performed. These categories are not necessarily discrete though there is little overlap between the first two categories and the last category. As for the last category of awu, such sites may be divided into awu wanhthi, or 'good awu', and awu waya, or 'bad awu'. There is a general proposition put forward by the Kugu-Nganychara that awu wanhthi should only be activated by members of the corporation holding the estate in which the awu falls; and that awu waya, especially those not considered too dangerous, may be activated by non-members as well as members of the corporation. Activities performed at awu wanhthi are deemed to be for the general good; activities performed at awu waya are deemed to provoke a general nuisance, or widespread harm.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that awu wanhthi are allocated differentially between men and women, and, also, that certain awu do not fall conveniently in 'heartland' (agu kunyji), but in "company land".

To re-state some of the major points:

(i) McConnel does not distinguish between awu as such. One consequence is that she does not distinguish clearly between major ceremonial activities and 'increase rites'.

(ii) McConnel does not distinguish between 'increase rites' performed by men and those performed by women.

(iii) She does not appear to envisage the possibility that there may be awa for which there are no creative mytho-historical accounts (or "stories").

(iv) She does not appear to envisage the possibility that there may be awa at which no 'increase rites' are performed.

(v) She states that "each pulwaiya-cult is controlled by members of the particular clan to which it belongs..." This does not appear to take into account the differential nature of access to and the activities performed at awu wanhthi and awu waya among the Kugu-Nganychara; nor does she show any awareness of the notion of "company land".

There are several possible explanations for what appear to be quite important differences. Firstly, there may in fact be quite serious differences in local, social and ceremonial organization between the two areas. For example, among the Kugu-Nganychara the songs and dances - what McConnel calls "a series of dramas, dances and chants" - associated with or performed at the major ceremonies are in no way related to kam waya. In some cases they relate to awu, but they are performed at a central ceremonial ground not at the awu themselves. There is a sense in which people who "control" the awu may be seen to have a special link with the song or dance as performed within the framework of the ceremony. However, it is only one of several special links which people may have with songs and dances. One may be that they were taught the songs by a particular celebrated

singer and, in a situation where few men become or are capable of becoming good singers, they may have served as their protégés. Performance of songs is not dependent on control of particular awu. Similarly, individual dancers may be assigned rôles within dances on the basis of the fact that their father assumed (or created) the rôle at an earlier period of time. We have observed such a case in Chapter 11. In the wanam ceremony, the spirits of the two kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers who "finished off" at thaha-kungadha, are portrayed by two men who do not belong to the corporation which controls the estate in which thaha-kungadha (or wanam-awu) is located.

Moreover, the awu associated with these ceremonies are deemed to have been created by the actions of a restricted range of individuals, viz., the kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers, the "Turtle" man, the mongkom men, the munka man separating off from his apalacha brother, the pucha man and his wife, and so on. There are perhaps one or two cases where a character who is kam waya to the members of a particular corporation left an awu and even a song, e.g., yuku wongbe, the Rhinoceros beetle. However, there is no major ceremony linked to these events[1]. McConnel (1936: 458) lists as one of the features of totemic organization:

> A group of myths describing the original activities of the pulwaiya and the manner of the hero's transformation into the totemic object, and the inauguration of ritual with which the pulwaiya is associated.

This state of affairs appears almost totally alien to the KNg region. The implication that each kam waya is associated with an original eponymous creator whose exploits are recorded in an heroic saga,

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1. Moreover, yuku wongbe as awu and yuku wongbe as kam waya relate to different estates. The awu is found in estate HU1; the kam waya belongs to estates X1, 4, 5, 6, and possibly others, e.g., H5.

that each kam waya is represented by an awu where the ancestor "went down", and that each is associated with particular ritual activities, can only in rare cases be substantiated from the Kugu-Nganychara data, and then only for the inland division. Kam waya - at least according to the story of the mongkom brothers - are assigned in quite an arbitrary manner. Awu are 'left' by heroes who in most cases are kam waya to no one; or they are there "from start".

Alternative explanations are simply that McConnel failed to record certain beliefs and practices which may have caused her to present a different analysis of the Archer River region; or that she misinterpreted certain data.

Without supplementary fieldwork it is difficult to pinpoint what are in fact omissions in McConnel's account, and what are in fact major differences between the two regions. For example, neither Thomson nor McConnel says anything on the matter of spirit conception and the function of awu in this respect. Among the Kugu-Nganychara, 'increase' activities are very straightforward affairs, surrounded by little ceremonialism. They appear only as special cases of similar practices carried out in day-to-day affairs, when hunters call on the assistance of "old people". The latter are not the elements or essences or actual items which are "frightened" at the awu. Rather they control or have the power to activate these elements or essences or items.

In Chapter 10 I noted that the people of the KNg region are closely identified with their kam waya in ways other than simply naming: in everyday behaviour and in terms of physical resemblance;

in conflict situations or in situations of danger; in dreams; and so on. It is difficult to believe that similar beliefs were not held on the Archer River.

The Archer River "revisited":

McConnel's data are most detailed for the local group she calls the "Bonefish Clan" (see Appendix B). This group is located on the lower Archer River, in the broad triangle of country running back eastward from the junction of the Archer and Watson Rivers. It is the nearest Wik-Mungkana estate to Aurukun. McConnel (and Thomson), camped at the Aurukun Landing, could easily look across the Watson River to chejam, the point of land where the rivers join, and the most westerly extension of the estate.

McConnel writes (1936: 458): "The bonefish-cult may be taken as a typical example of the pulwaiya cult in the Wikmunkan and allied tribes (see also 1936: 495)." There is little question that data drawn from this estate are most supportive of McConnel's model. The data may be presented in tabular form (see Table 4).

The first column lists pulwaiya for the group which McConnel (1930: 204) identifies as local group II, and elsewhere as the "Bonefish clan" (e.g., McConnel 1935: 68). The order followed is that laid down in her summary entitled List of Local Groups and Totems of the Wik-Mungkan Tribe (1930: 204-5). She specifies (1936: 458) that the "bonefish pulwaiya" is "boss" yet it is strange that she does not rank it first in the order. The last two items, iyebana (peewit) and wantya-koman (young-girl-at-puberty) (retaining her orthography of the WM terms, and her English glosses), do not appear in the 1930 summary. Both are first mentioned in a later

TABLE 4 : ARCHER RIVER: LOCAL GROUP AR2 - "BONEFISH"

	Pulwaiya	Personal names	Auwa	Increase rituals	Ceremony	Myth or Story
(1)	mai korpi - edible mangrove	♀ kontutthan	+	0	+ (U) (subsidiary only)	+
(2)	min wolkollan - bonefish	♂ bambeigan ♂ yangkambin ♀ tipwunta	+	+	+ (W)	+
(3)	neanya - fly	0	+	+	0	+
(4)	min tatta - edible frog	0	+	0	0	+
(5)	moiya - bullroarer	0		-	+ (U)	+
(6)	iyebana - peewit	0	+	0	+ (W) (subsidiary only)	+
(7)	wantya-koman - young-girl-at-puberty	0	+(?)	-	+ (U)	+

Key: Under auwa, + = auwa marked with circle on map (1930
0 = auwa indicated (without circle) on map
- = no auwa indicated on map

Elsewhere, + = positively attested
0 = may occur, but no details provided
- = probably does not occur, no details available

article (1936: 458). The last item is associated with moiya, or bullroarer. McConnel does not indicate whether she exhausted, or even attempted to exhaust, the list of pulwaiya or not. Certainly none are added after the 1936 article (though there may be a case for including also the black flying-fox.)

In her summary, McConnel does not indicate whether the items listed are, in fact, pulwaiya or auwa. She simply refers to them as totems. I have assumed that they are indeed pulwaiya. In any case, their status as pulwaiya has mostly been able to be confirmed separately from textual comments made throughout McConnel's writings. My task (for I have not assumed that they are also auwa unless their status as auwa is attested in textual comments) has been to establish whether there are indeed auwa for every pulwaiya listed. The simplest procedure has been to consult the maps presented by McConnel (1930: 191; and 1957: xviii). These maps contain slight differences. One difference is that on the earlier map McConnel indicates by a circle those auwa or "totemic centres" which she has visited or has had described to her. Of the pulwaiya listed, only two, viz., bonefish and bullroarer, are represented by a circle on the map. It would be safest, in these circumstances, to accept that there were in fact only these two auwa. However, she also represents mangrove, frog, peewit, banana bird and fly on the map in the region where the estate seems to be located. Curiously she has the mangrove (mai korpi) auwa marked as being located on the Archer River. This coincides with an early comment (1930: 189) that "In the lower reaches of the Archer River, the banks of which are lined with mangrove, is the auwa of the black mangrove (mai korpi) ...." However, in a later article (1935: 75-6), she locates the auwa at a place called Potyamamanam which she specifies lies on the Watson River. In her

final publication (1957: 6) she again locates it on "the lower reaches of the Archer"; and consistently or inconsistently, depending on one's viewpoint, she does not alter its position on her map.

Frog, peewit, banana bird and fly are all marked as lying along a watercourse she labels Kakam Creek. However, nowhere in her writings does she indicate that banana bird is either pulwaiya or auwa to this or any other group. McConnel (1930: 196; 1936: 458-9) does note that there are auwa for mangrove, frog, peewit, and fly. She specifies that increase activities are conducted, either for economic reasons, in the case of the mangrove and (edible) frog auwa, or for nuisance value, in the case of flies. However, she does not indicate that activities of any description occur at the peewit auwa; nor is it easy to guess what their economic or nuisance value might be. In fact, McConnel only provides full details of the auwa, its physical characteristics, and the activities performed there, in the case of bonefish. In short, the relationship between pulwaiya, auwa and "increase ceremony" is only partially confirmed even from her most detailed case study.

Moreover, although moiya and wantya-koman are associated with a named locality - viz., kulepan on the Watson River (1930: 200) - it is difficult to know how McConnel fits them into her schema. She gives no indication that particular activities are performed at this site. My own research indicates that the site must be avoided (i.e., it is classified as aak ngayncha); that no "increase rituals" are performed at the site; and that both moiya and wantya-koman are significant in what is a non-localised ceremony, viz., uchanama. That is, contained within McConnel's data are at least three categories of auwa: (1) auwa at which increase activities

are performed[1]; (2) auwa connected with natural species (peewit) for which no increase activities are recorded; and (3) auwa connected with items which are non-faunal or non-floral in character - bullroarers and young-girls-at-puberty - for which there are no increase activities as such, but which represent items which figure prominently in a major ceremony. I have already made similar discriminations among awu for the KNg region.

Continuing with the question of major ceremonies, McConnel records that there is a "bonefish" ritual which is performed within the winychinama ceremony. Although she does not specify the fact, this ceremony is non-localised in character. That is, we cannot assume that the ritual is necessarily or, in fact, ever, performed at minha-awa. In this sense, the ritual is a mobile, dramatic representation of the pulwaiya and perhaps, indeed fairly clearly in the case of "bonefish", the auwa with which it is associated[2]. Both moiya and wantya-koman are recorded as the subjects of performances in the lesser and preparatory ceremony, uchanama. None of the other pulwaiya figure as the special subjects of

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1. It is interesting in this connexion to note that in describing the activities performed as the bonefish auwa, which McConnel locates at Adeda, and which is known at Aurukun simply as minha-awa (Ng. minha-awu), McConnel (1935: 67) records the term kantaiyan which she translates as "chase them out". It is clearly cognate with the Kugu-Mu'inh verb, kent- - frighten, which is also used to describe the chasing or frightening of fish or animals or plants from awu.

2. The same applies to another ritual performance relating to "bonefish" (and also performed within winychinama). It depicts the spearing of "bonefish" from a bark canoe. The rôle of the hunter is always taken by a member of the "bonefish clan". Other rôles - the fish and the man paddling the canoe - are taken by members of neighbouring "clans" (mostly members of McConnel's local group X). There are insufficient male adult members of the "clan" to fill all rôles even were this the ideal, which fact is by no means established.

performances in these ceremonies, though mangrove (who sits as a "woman" to one side during the "bonefish ritual") and peewit, which is represented by feathers worn in the men's head-dresses during the same ritual, are involved in a subsidiary manner.

The same situation applies to personal names. Names are only recorded as being derived from "bonefish" and mangrove. The fact that names are not derived from moiya and wantya-koman, although they are ceremonially important, tends to suggest that they belong to a distinct category[1]. The fact that fly and frog do not figure in the ceremonies, and do not serve as foci for personal names, tends to support McConnel's view that they are less important. Moreover, it suggests that the "totemic norm" to which McConnel sometimes refers relates only to the most important items. That is, the matrix presented in the table becomes less and less coherent (or "consistent") as the items represented by the auwa or the pulwaiya become less important. The argument would appear to be that certain items - as either pulwaiya or auwa (keeping these two categories analytically distinct) - are subject to symbolic elaboration: in naming, ceremonies, songs, etc. This argument runs directly counter to the view which McConnel seems to espouse, viz., that pulwaiya imply eponymous auwa, and vice versa; and, carrying the argument further, that, forming a necessary couple, they immediately entail songs, increase ceremonies, ritual performances, decorative designs (used for painting objects or dancers), and creative sagas. The point is that none of these features is a necessary concomitant of auwa or pulwaiya; they are simply elaborations.

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1. My own suggestion, subject to confirmation by additional research in the area, is that these items are indeed associated with auwa, but are not pulwaiya. This would also bring them more in line with the Kugu-Nganychara situation.

Moreover, the range of elaborations is potentially limitless: injunctions for or against eating totem animals; postulated physical resemblance between the totem and its adherents; languages (and linguistic variations) labelled by recourse to totems; the interpretation (and the actual content) of dreams; and so on. The situation is like a football team which owns a football ground, and has a particular guernsey to distinguish it from opposition teams. The team may choose to call itself the "Tigers" and therefore select a guernsey made up of orange and black stripes; or the choice of guernsey may earn it the epithet of "Tigers". However, the consequences of this labelling are potentially limitless: the area from which the team recruits its members may be called "Tiger Territory", the team ground may be described as the "Home of the Tigers", supporters may wear the team's colours and wave or wear tiger elblems, the players may wear tiger motifs on their guernseys, cheer squads may dress in tiger outfits, and so on. However, this is quite a different argument from suggesting that these elaborations are all necessary components of a single complex.

In the case of the football team, what is important is the team itself (including the maintenance of its playing strength) and its access to a home ground. Formally, the situation is the same with respect to any local corporation. It must maintain its membership, however minimally; and it must maintain an estate, or "home ground". In the case of the "Bonefish clan", McConnel's stress on the economic value of the "bonefish" is not illegitimate, for it constitutes a resource over which members of the corporation are seen to exert control. It is common knowledge that within the Wik region the "bonefish" only occurs in the Archer River estuary. As a Kugu-Nganychara informant stated:

> It is not found Christmas Creek; it is not found Holroyd; it is not found Kendall. Nothing Love River; nothing Yu'ungk; but Weipa alright. Archer River main place; and beachside: Pera Head, Norman River, ikalath and Waterfall. You can see its tail showing out of the water.

The last-mentioned sites all occur north of the Archer River mouth. The "bonefish" is particularly associated with the mangrove-lined channels and islands of the lower Archer River and Watson River. It arrives in shoals while the water in the river is clear. Grant (1965: 24) reports such shoals as "ranging to 30 lb. and better" for Papuan waters. Fish of this size constitute a major food resource while they are running. McConnel (1936: 460) writes: "The bonefish spearing activities are presided over by the members of the bonefish clan, who invite other clans to come and participate in the fishing activities when the fish are plentiful." Thus the fish both support the local corporation and allow it to play "home matches". Thus it can serve as a symbol of both the corporation and its estate. Its symbolic value is enhanced by the fact that it requires special butchering techniques. Were the resource to disappear, it is not difficult to envisage that the auwa would lose its significance; 'increase ceremonies' would cease; and the corporation, were it able to survive within the estate without the resource, would need to readjust its subsistence strategies. This readjustment might involve, for example, the abandonment of the sites from which the "bonefish" was formerly exploited, including the site on which the activity principally focused, i.e., the auwa as breeding ground of the fish, as McConnel claims in this case, or as a focal point within or closely associated with the major camp-site where visitors were accommodated during the fishing season. McConnel does not seem to have envisaged the latter possibility. The "bonefish" might survive in names, and as pulwaiya. However, other auwa, more impressively manifesting the distinctiveness of local identity,

TABLE 5: ARCHER RIVER: LOCAL GROUP AR3 - "WHITE FISH-HAWK"

	Pulwaiya	Personal names	Auwa	Increase rituals	Ceremony	Myth or story
(1)	kong kong - white fish-hawk	♂ kuandambin o kungamai +	+	-		+
(2)	min parkanjan - small hawk		-	-		+
(3)	min tempi - swamp duck	o wik te'an (?) +	0	0		+
(4)	min mantaba - plains turkey		-	0		+ ?
(5)	min wunkam - rock cod		0	0		
(6)	min tuttha - parrot		0	0		+
(7)	min ariki - swamp water-lily		Taimanir ?	0		?
(8)	wanka - string dilly-bag		+	-		+
(9)	puntamen - fishing net	o mewutthan bungan +	+	-		+

Key: Under auwa, + = auwa marked with circle on map (1930)
0 = auwa indicated (without circle) on map
- = no auwa indicated on map

Elsewhere, + = positively attested
0 = may occur, but no details provided
- = probably does not occur: no details available

might gain prominence (or spring into being).

I wish now to turn to a second case, viz., local group AR3 (McConnel's local group III). Data are tabulated in the same manner as for "Bonefish" (see Table 5). This local group is located upstream from "Bonefish" (AR2). It focuses on meeRokm(an) (Merokman, in McConnel 1930: 192), a major site at the junction of two branches of the Archer River. The fish hawk auwa is a large dead tree on the north bank just below the junction; the fishing net and dilly bag auwa lie directly opposite in the bed of the river. The channel is extremely deep at this point; and when the fresh water is running there is no doubt a strong back eddy as the river rounds the bend and is joined by the water pouring in from the other branch. This no doubt accounts for the "whirlpool" which occurs in stories relating to the site (see story A014, listed in Appendix B).

In this case the principal pulwaiya is undoubtedly minha kang-kang, the White-breasted sea-eagle. The dead tree which constitutes the auwa is renowned as a nesting place for the bird. The birds have nested there as long as people remember. However, there is some evidence (not provided by McConnel) that the fish hawk auwa is not the principal auwa. If a stranger visits me.Rokm it is usually the dilly bag story in the bed of the river which is disturbed; and a "dilly bag cloud" will appear in the sky (cf. discussion under awu in Chapter 10). McConnel gives no evidence to this effect, but it is extremely unlikely that there are increase ceremonies for any of the phenomena represented by auwa at the major camp-site. The phenomena may be represented in the major ceremonies but McConnel provides no information in this respect. Names derive from pulwaiya which are associated (through auwa) with the principal

camp-site. In summary, the focal point of the "home ground" serves to symbolize both the estate corporation and the estate. Its importance is not indicated by a major economic resource, but with sea-eagles which are customarily associated with the site, or with bags or nets which habitually appear to be associated with whirlpools (cf. waychi-awu, X5)[1]. The auwa serves in any case to mark a major river crossing controlled by members of this estate. It is unlikely that the site would ever have lost its importance for it is strategic in a number of ways; but being the focus of intense social activities new associations would continually be called into play. Should the eagles nest elsewhere, or the tree disappear, or the whirlpool cease to hold its dangers for visitors, any one of these new associations could serve to symbolize it.

As with local group AR2, the picture seems more coherent (or, to retain McConnel's term, "consistent") for the more important pulwaiya and auwa. However, for the secondary items, the data are generally confusing. The small hawk, min parkanjan, is probably associated in some fairly direct way with kong kong, e.g., as "mate" or "B-". McConnel marks no auwa for it on either of her maps. Nor does she mark any auwa for min mantaba, plains turkey, on her map; and min wunkam, here listed as "rock cod" and marked on the map, already occurs as min wunkam, translated as "night-fish", for local group AR1. My own research has revealed that an auwa for plains turkey also occurs in AR1, on Merkunga Creek near its junction with the Watson River. McConnel was sensitive to cases of duplication, for, according to her model, they should not occur. However,

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1. The reasons for this association are not clear unless there is some cognitive process equating whirlpools (water moving in contrary directions) with the knotting of string bags or nets.

she neither comments on the case of min wunkam, nor appears aware of the second case. In short, her data are very incomplete and poorly analysed. Continuing upstream, her data generally deteriorate and become sketchier as she herself indicated would be the case.

One general proposition can be made for the whole river system (not including the coastal strip which McConnel ignores): the coincidence of the principal pulwaiya and auwa (even where it is possible to establish these as separate orders) is very high and may, for many estates, be complete. In this sense 'totemic organization' along the Archer River may be said to be coherent, and to differ markedly from the situation as generally encountered in the KNg region. However, when we turn to the less important auwa and pulwaiya, the degree of coincidence is much less. Further research might indicate that it is still high; however, McConnel's evidence is at least rather suspect. Moreover, it is possible to distinguish between different types of auwa. Some play a part in major ceremonies; some have increase activities associated with them; some are linked with both; some are linked with neither. McConnel has not pursued these questions sufficiently rigorously, and the data base is rather thin. We might conclude, however, that re-analysis draws the Archer River region closer to the Kugu-Nganychara rather than further away. The following example might further cement this impression.

Local groups AR9a and AR10, focused on ku'awa and oonya-awa respectively, show a common feature which McConnel does not report for the other local groups. She writes of ku'awa (McConnel 1930: 201): "Near by is a flat place levelled by the water, where the male and female dingoes come up to play at night." This remark may be

compared with a similar comment on oonya-awa (McConnel 1930: 198):

> The big lagoon - *Ornyauwa* is the *auwa* of the male ghosts *(ornya)*, and a smaller one - *Pantiauwa* - is the *auwa* of the female ghosts *(pino)*, of which the most interesting are the young girls *(pantia* = sweethearts*)*. Romance centres round *Pantiauwa*. Ghosts from the two lagoons meet in the space between...

"Play" is the term commonly applied to dancing and to sexual activity. The two estates which are recorded as having such "play grounds" lie contiguously to each other. It suggests to me that this is a local innovation, which may be either retreating or expanding from one group to another. No doubt other localised variations could be found in the Archer River region. Such variations are important for they run against the picture of tranquil uniformity painted by McConnel, and bring the area much more in line with my own experiences among the Kugu-Nganychara where local innovations and heterodoxy are the order of the day.

At another level, I have already commented on the common practice of using dog names (prefixed by ku'a - dog, dingo) for the KNg region. A similar practice seems to have been practised on the Archer River. McConnel records a number of names, principally for men, prefixed by ku- or ko-, e.g., Ku:máma, Kuwí:pa, Ku:pala (1957: 5); Kúwaté (p. 8); Kú:'u'ŋána (p. 9). In most cases these elements no doubt constitute the same prefix, viz., ku'a. The distribution of such names is not standardized or uniform throughout the Archer River region. Nor is it uniform in the KNg region. The evidence points to a common principle applied unsystematically throughout the whole Wik region. It indicates that a proper approach to 'totemic organization' (and to other questions) should move between intense local studies on the one hand, and a general overview of the whole region on the other. The general

situation appears to be better characterized as variations on common themes, rather than isolable clusters of common features serving to distinguish meaningful sub-regions. This appears to be true at least along a north-south axis for the Kugu-Nganychara lie at the opposite end of the Wik-region to the people of the Archer River.

Birds as kam waya and awu in the Kugu-Nganychara region:

McConnel, following Radcliffe-Brown's analysis of talu among the Kariera and neighbouring "tribes" (Radcliffe-Brown 1913), has argued that auwa (and thus pulwaiya) are: (1) environmentally apt; and (2) of major utilitarian value (both as economic resources and for their nuisance value). Moreover, the argument is expanded to "cover practically every recognized aspect of social life, i.e., physical, physiological, economic, purely social and spiritual..." (McConnel 1936: 457). Totems have a major social value, either positive or negative. Lévi-Strauss soundly takes her (and through her, Radcliffe-Brown) to task for this argument. He writes (1969: 134-5)

> ... It would be difficult to find anything which, in one way or another, positively or negatively (or even because of its lack of significance?), might not be said to offer an interest, and the utilitarian and naturalist theory would thus be reduced to a series of propositions empty of any content.

Lévi-Strauss's argument is of course that totems serve simply to distinguish social groups from each other (rather like football guernseys with respect to football teams). This argument itself is poorly substantiated from the KNg region for totems - as auwa - do not always serve unambiguously to differentiate one social group from another. They have a real life of their own.

McConnel argues that "The totemic objects, in which the pulwaiya are incarnated and which are distributed amongst the various clans and tribes, are complementary..." and generally are not re-duplicated. In other words, the activities performed at the auwa serve for the welfare or discomfort of the whole social universe (however that is to be defined), and do not merely serve local interests. There is some general evidence from the Kugu-Nganychara to support this view. People state that they "chase out" fish or yams, etc., for everybody. Moreover, mosquitoes, "cold sick" or hot weather do not only affect enemies; they also affect the person who activates the awu and members of his close family.

McConnel (1936: 457) comments that where reduplication does occur ("only in a few cases"), it is among the "coastal tribes". She argues that "Such reduplication suggests disturbance in local settlement of the coastal areas..." McConnel's position, in this respect, is not inimical to that of Lévi-Strauss. The logic of his argument would be that each group requiring identification would need its own set of distinctive markers, or distinctive features. He would easily account for reduplication by arguing that it preserved the history of the groups, recalling a time when they constituted a single unit.

Despite the problems inherent in their positions, it would seem worthwhile to conduct the following tasks:

(1) To try and establish why certain items are selected out of the physical (and cultural) environment as awu or kam waya. Why are other items ignored? Do either sets, i.e., those selected and those not selected, show any regular features?

(2) To what extent do particular awu or kam waya recur?

(3) What is the relationship between the items which are represented by awu and those which serve as kam waya? Are there any sub-regional variations in the patterning of this relationship?

To carry out even this restricted set of tasks, a number of steps would be required. Firstly, it would be necessary to isolate all items in the environment. The next step might be to determine which items are named, and, at a higher level, how they are classified, e.g., as plant, mammal, fish, etc. Thereafter, each item could be checked against a number of different dimensions. In what environment is it found? Is it used as a food? If so, how significant is it as a food item (i.e., as a qualitative question, or as a question of nutrition)? How is it valued as a food item? Does it serve in some way in technology? In what way does it fit into the value system of the society? Is it dangerous or safe? Is it beneficial or harmful? What is the range of its appearances in the cultural repertoire of the society, at the level of songs, dances, stories, string games, and so on? Is it subject to special beliefs? The list of questions is apparently endless.

For two broad reasons my own aims are relatively restricted. Firstly, it would be impossible to isolate all items in any environment. An alternative procedure might be to concentrate on just those items which are named by the society under study. However, even here major problems are encountered. In the first instance, all items can be fitted into at least one cultural category, and consequently, in this sense, all things can be said to be named. If, however, we were to concentrate on what one might call the species level,

we might ignore a number of items without specific names but which figure prominently in the system of use, or of belief, or of value. For example, as we have already noted, a number of unnamed plants figure prominently among the people of the KNg region as opar, or "medicine" (see Chapter 8). I have already suggested that with respect to "medicine" it might be possible to argue for a distinction between culturally-held and privately-held bodies of knowledge. Given that such private bodies of knowledge exist and are culturally important, we would not know how to proceed. The second problem relates to the question of determining the range of dimensions which would need to be covered to establish utility or value.

Consequently, I decided to select out a single domain, viz., birds, for a detailed case study. The reasons are straightforward:

- the avifauna of Western Cape York Peninsula are probably better known and more researched than other fauna;
- the domain (avifauna) comprises a large number of different species, but not too many so as to be unmanageable;
- species comprising the domain are found in association with each of the habitats;
- birds are relatively easily observed in the field, and informants are interested in identifying them and observing their behaviour;
- there are a number of illustrated reference works available so that the researcher is not dependent on field observation alone;
- certain birds are important food items;
- numbers of species are represented by awu or serve as kam waya;
- birds constitute a single domain, both from a European viewpoint and from a Kugu-Nganychara (and Wik) viewpoint.

The aims of the study were as follows:

(1) To discover the full range of lexical items used to label members of a single domain;

(2) To identify, even if in a somewhat tentative fashion but according to the Western system of taxonomy, the birds named by the Kugu-Nganychara and those which are unnamed;

(3) To discover which birds were (or are) classified as food items by the Kugu-Nganychara;

(4) To discover which birds breed in the area, according to the Kugu-Nganychara, and their distribution according to environment and seasonality;

(5) To discover which birds are represented by awu;

(6) To discover which birds serve as kam waya.

Although I have at different times discussed birds with various informants, collected names in the various Kugu-Nganychara dialects and attempted to identify them with the help of informants - from reference works, from collections held at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, and from various live collections in different parts of Queensland -, it seemed useful to perform the tasks exhaustively through formal interviews with a single informant, in a single dialect. The reasons are as follows:

- there can be no certainty that naming practices do not vary from dialect to dialect;
- knowledge tends to vary according to each individual's local perspective and his awareness of the cultural repertoire of neighbouring local groups;
- in this particular sphere of knowledge, information varies dramatically according to the environmental conditions with which each informant is familiar. Thus, it is doubly

exigent to locate one's informant carefully - both socially and environmentally. For example, an informant from the inland is likely to be familiar with birds which do not occur on the coast, and vice versa. Also, there will be some variation along a north-south axis;

- age will profoundly affect the level of knowledge of informants;
- data may also vary according to the sex of informants.

In short, it is more rigorous to use a single informant than the accumulated data collected at random from a number of informants. It would have been useful and interesting to compare the data of a number of informants drawn from strategically chosen different locations, and perhaps varying according to age, sex, and years of residence in the bush. However, this task lies beyond the present study.

The relevant personal details of my informant for this particular study are as follows: Language - Kugu-Mu'inh; Estate - X5 ("Possum"); coastal division. Born approximately 1924 at winychinam-umu, in estate T2 ("Dead body"), in his mother's country, where he spent much of his early life. His early years were spent almost exclusively along the coast, between "Christmas Creek" and the "Thuuk River". Later as a young married man, he spent some time working on both Rokeby and Merapah Stations. As a result he has some familiarity both with the environment and with social organization in that area. After his first wife died, he married a woman from the "Holroyd" (estate HU1). He has also lived at both Edward River and Aurukun.

TABLE 6 : BIRDS AS KAM WAYA AND AWU - A "CHRISTMAS CREEK" PERSPECTIVE.

No.	Name (Mu)	No. of species	Nesting	K.W.	AWU	Length (mm)
1	nhampi, aychamba	1	2	4	4,1	2000
2	madhe	1	1	3	3	1600-1800
3	panhthigan	1	1	1	1	900
4	nguma	2	0	1	0	600-800
5	umu-ethere	2	1	1	1	760
6	nhaara	1	0	0	7(?)	760
7	puypun	4	0	0	0	250-545
8	peba, wanychi	1	1	1	0	1040
9	engk-l-piya	1	0	1	0	910
10	thoko	1	0	1	0	670
11	workom	1	1	1	0	480
12	kundu	3	1	3,1	0	(300-)600
13	kayje	3(4)	1	1	0	560-830
14	-----	1	1	1	1	590
15	monte, wotpen-unych.n	1	1,2	2	0	1140
16	kaha-yuwa	1	1	1	0	700
17	mebeny	1	0	0	0	700
18	wuntu, kaha-me'e	1	0	0	0	520
19	kaha-pila	1	1	0	0	750
20	winychin	1	1	0	0	890
21	ko'on	1	1	3,5,1	7	710-920
22	woyowa	1	1	1	0	550-610
23	pila	1	1	0	1	415-615
24	koon	1	1	1	0	485-610
25	thampe	1	1	1	1	470-610
26	potpoda	1	0	0	0	370-440
27	punhtha pigon	1	0	0	0	450-530
28	meempen	2	1	0	0	305-380

TABLE 6

No.	Name (Mu)	No. of species	Nesting	K.W.	AWU	Length (mm)
29	mucha kigand	1	?	0	0	360
30	tha'u thayan	3	1,2	0	0	280-430
31	ngutu	3	1.2	3	0	300-520
32	nginyong, nginya	3	1.2	4	4	500-1000
33	paba, thochon puugam	1	1,2	1(4?)	0	450-510
34	patpa	2	1.2	0	7	480-550
35	tha'u-pilamu	1	1	0	2	760-840
36	mumu-munhth	1(2)	1,2	0	0	450-580
37	thina	1	1	1,7	0	500-630
38	keke	1	?	1,5	1,5	310-350
39	thukan	1	1	1	4	400
40	kuuku	1	1	1	4	700
41	kunhdha	1	1	0	1	180
42	yukume	1	1	0	1	130-140
43	kuchung	1	1,2	4	4	130-150
44	kor'a, thulka	1	1	7,5,8	1	950-1250
45	kor'a yomben.m	1	1	7,5,8	1	1400-1450
46	pidha					
47	yika	1	1	1	1	440-480
48	an-gu, mantawa	1	0	6	6	800-1200
49	mayalili	1	1	0	0	200-240
50	kunale	2	1	0	0	480
51	kothemb	1	1	3,7	3	330
52	kanggun	6	1	0	1	150-225
53	kuulawe, wayn-gan	4	1,2	2(?),3	2/6	250-570
54	kaha-wiyiya	11	0	0	0	230-650
55	kaha-muchi	1	1	0	0	385
56	chaka	1	0	0	0	440

TABLE 6

No.	Name (Mu)	No. of species	Nesting	K.W.	AWU	Length (mm)
57	woyuma	2	0	1(?)	0	200-230
58	miji	2(3)	0	1	7	(230-)560
59	kuuya	8(9)	0	1	0	205-460
60	mun-kayi	1	1,2	1	5	390-445
61	uba	1	1,2	1	5	280-310
62	kolet	1	1,2	1	5	190-210
63	kuulwan	1	1,2	1	5	190-215
64	(apa)	1	4	0	6(?)	260-310
65	pinba	1	1,2	1	2	230
66	maaya	1(5)	1	1	0	185
67	kila	1	0	0	0	600
68	pacham, kaareng	1	0	1	6(?)	500-610
69	muuwa	1	1	1	0	490
70	yeele	1	1	1	0	380
71	kalim	1	1	0	0	360
72	machigam, thuthu	1(2)	0	1	3	320(-430)
73	onto	2(9)	1	1(?)	0	260-300
74	penyjong	3(4)	1,2	1	6	240(-435)
75	pengkora	19	1	0	0	100-285
76	thowo	1	1	1/2	0	390-460
77	wudbi	1	1	1/2	0	600
78	pup	1	1	1	0	600-800
79	ngugu	3(4)	1	1	1	220-650
80	yiiwa	2	1	5,1,7	1	320-360
81	thalam	3	1	1,2	2	330-540
82	kumidha umpey	2	?	0	0	250-330
83	yidhu	6	1	2	4	120-280
84	kanga	1	0	0	0	460

TABLE 6

No.	Name (Mu)	No. of species	Nesting	K.W.	AWU	Length (mm)
85	konkon	1	?	2	4	400-460
86	munu-waka, moonyong	1	1	0	0	230
87	ekonhdha	1	1	0	0	270-300
88	nyaaya	2	1	0	0	280-330
89	ngangadha	1	1	0	0	250
90	angka	5	1	0	0	120-145
91	pinyinyala	1	1	3	0	80-90
92	kodhe, kodhewa	5	1	0	1	160-170
93	thithra	3	1	0	0	175-210
94	thochon	1	1	1	0	175
95	thupan	3	1	0	0	100-190
96	thopol	2(4)	2	0	0	250-350
97	kunych-ongkom	5	1,2	7	0	150-300
98	thumpi	1	1	0	0	100-110
99	wiiy-wiiy	3(4)	1	1	4	180-300
100	nyaku	5	?	0	6	170-360
101	yaayang	2	2	?	?	180-200
102	pinhdha-ek-iiya	2	1	0	0	130-160
103	monhthenda	3		0	5	100-140
104	ngongben	1	?	0	5	110
105	ngathalje	1	1	(1?)	0	300
106	yagwi	1	1	8,2/6	2/6	260-300
107	ngutu	1	0	0	0	170
108	kaha-pokom	2	1	1	0	420-460
109	wike	1	1	0	0	320-350
110	wadha	1	1	1	2/6	500

The data are presented in summary form in Table 6. Names of the birds are listed in Kugu-Mu'inh in column 2. As a number of species, from a western scientific viewpoint, are sometimes grouped under a single lexical item, this fact is recorded in column 3. The zone where the bird is known or thought to nest is recorded in column 4. Column 5 records the zone in which the bird occurs as kam waya (or 'totem'); and column 6 records the zone in which the bird is represented by an awu. Column 7 gives the length of the birds assigned to each label by my co-worker, giving the extremes of the range. There is an observable correlation between bird size and naming. In general, the larger the bird, the more likely that it will be given a name, i.e., the naming of large birds is more likely to correlate with the species divisions made by western scientists.

To facilitate the analysis, the Peninsula west of the Great Dividing Range was divided into a number of zones. Together they cover an area extending from about Chapman River in the south to Aurukun in the north, and eastwards to the watershed of the Coleman River. These zones are indicated by a number. The numbers are explained in the following key.

Key:

0 - Does not occur; unknown

1 - "Home area" - coastal or "beachside" division within KNg region, excluding Kendall River.

2 - Eastern or inland division of KNg region, excluding Kendall River.

3 - Kendall River - lower reaches.

4 - Kendall River - upstream; also includes Rokeby.

5 - South of the KNg region; Edward River.

6 - Extreme eastern division of KNg region (headwaters of Holroyd - upper Coleman River).

7 - Coast north of Kendall River: Knox Creek, Kirke River, Peret outstation, Love River.

8 - Archer River (particularly in the area of Aurukun).

When my informant used the word "home", he was referring in the first instance to the lower reaches of "Christmas Creek"; however, he normally coupled his comments with statements about "mother's country" or "Thuuk River". Moreover, as the data show, he conceptualises distribution sharply in terms of east and west (kawa and kuwa). These terms are used precisely in the senses explained in Chapter 9. Generalised distribution within the KNg region is indicated by the code 1/2. This indicates that the bird is found both on the coast and inland.

Findings:

There are 18 named species (from my co-worker's viewpoint) which are not thought to breed within the "home area" (i.e., the coastal division) or in the area immediately east of it (i.e., the inland division). In none of these cases is the named bird associated with an awu in either division. Significantly, however, 7 of these named birds are recorded as kam waya, all of them for the coastal division. This includes one slightly doubtful case, minha woyuwa (no. 57), assigned to X2 on the basis of one deceased woman's name. It has not been listed formally as kam waya for the members of the estate (in Appendix C).

My co-worker put forward the general proposition that inland, kam waya and awu were "all in one", i.e., the presence of an item as kam waya would immediately posit the presence of an awu in the same estate. In other words, he has a model of 'totemic organization' for the inland division of the KNg region which is identical with

that provided by McConnel for the Archer River. A number of cases do not support this proposition (viz., nos. 15, 76, 77, 83, and 85). However, the following birds do conform (or were made to conform) with this model: (no. 1) minha nhampi - Emu (KU3); (no. 32) minha nginyong - Wedge-tailed eagle (KU6); (no. 43) minha kuchung - Little quail (KU7); (no. 106) minha yagwi; and also possibly (no. 53) minha kuulawe - prob. Southern stone curlew (XU2). Looking at the awu - kam waya correlation (i.e., by reversing the direction of the equation), a number of cases fail to conform: nos. 35, 39, 40, 65, 99 and 110. A further case (no. 53), referred to above,is doubtful. In short, at least 8 out of 13 cases are 'aberrant' in terms of the model. My co-worker was less firm in postulating the correlation of kam waya with an eponymous awu, rather than the other way round. However, the linking of awu with eponymous kam waya produces only slightly better results: 5 cases conform with the model (see above); 6 cases do not.

To review the main findings:

(1) There is a high correlation between breeding and awu, to the extent that if a bird does not breed within the KNg region it is not represented by an awu.

(2) Not all breeding birds are represented by awu (see nos. 8, 11, 13, 15-6, 19, 20, 24, 28, 30-1, 33, 36, 48, 55, 60, 66, 69-71, 73, 75-8).

(3) Non-breeding birds are not precluded from serving as kam waya (e.g., nos. 4, 9, 10, 58-8, etc.).

(4) Breeding birds need not necessarily serve as kam waya e.g., 19, 20, 28, 30, 34, 35, 41-2, 44-5, 49, 50-2, 55, etc.

(5) My informant has a model of the "totemic organization" of

the inland such that kam waya must be represented by an awu. For the inland division, kam waya and awu are said to be "all in one". The inverse relationship is less strongly sustained by my informant, though he did suggest in one or two cases that the presence of awu must imply eponymous kam waya. The objective evidence slightly favours his view of things: i.e., the positing of awu on the basis of known kam waya is more justified by the evidence than the positing of kam waya on the basis of awu.

(6) The model held by my informant of the relationship between kam waya and awu for the coastal division is borne out by the facts. Kam waya and awu are hardly ever 'in-phase' in this division. When they do coincide, the coincidence is not regarded as having any necessary character.

In more general terms, there do not appear to be any simple rules why certain items should serve as kam waya or not, or be represented by awu.[1] In line with McConnel's remarks, there is in fact remarkably little reduplication of awu even over a wide area. However, there is considerable reduplication of kam waya. Awu are fixed in terms of precise localities, and are thus at least relatively immobile.

It would be possible to argue, following McConnel, that the low level of reduplication of awa/awu indicates or implies a regional level of organization. Taking the above data, it could be suggested that this would be located at the level of the Wik region, rather than at the level of the Archer River or KNg regions. While data are lacking for considerable sections of the wider region, or have not yet been analysed, the argument can only be

1. This overstates the case somewhat for it ignores the apparent correlation between breeding and awu. (Elsewhere in the Wik region it may not work so well).

said to consist of a preliminary suggestion. However, the argument is furthered, rather than weakened, by separating kam waya (or puul waya) off from awa/awu, for the "mobility" of kam waya/puul waya may well reflect social disruption or population movement, or, more in line with my own thinking, a combination of segmentary pressures and disappearing local groups, within the coastal division.

It is very tempting to postulate that the sharp dichotomy in 'totemic organization' between coast and inland is, in fact, a general feature of the Wik region, and aligns with other known differences, e.g., high diversity of languages on the coast, low diversity inland; complex environmental systems, comprising many micro-environments on the coast, less complex environmental systems inland; and so on. While gaps remain in the data presented here, notably the area along the coast north of the Kendall River is ignored, as are the headwaters of some of the shorter streams (e.g., Knox Creek and southern branches of the Kirke River), some of the data are available, either from research conducted by Sutton in the Cape Keerweer - Kirke River region, or from my own more superficial dealings with the whole region.

Sutton's work is in the process of analysis. However, the situation he has encountered bears many striking parallels with the coastal division of the KNg region (Sutton, personal communication).

The lower Kirke River region consists of a number of local groups speaking a number of languages or dialects: Wik-Ngathara, Wik-Epa, Wik-Ngathana, Wik Mungkana and Wik-Iinytyanya. Each local group controls a number of named sites, either exclusively or in company with another similar group. It has a set of 'totems'

(ngatha kooenhiya - "my brother") from which people derive personal names (both "big" and "little" names, as for the KNg and Archer River regions). The term ngatha kooenhiya is seen as equivalent to puul waya (WM) and kam waya (Mu). There are a number of 'increase centres' located within the landscape. They fall under the control of the members of the estate in which they are located. These sites are referred to as eemoetha (Nn). This term is seen by people of the region as equivalent to awu (Ng) or awa (WM). Estates within the coastal division are linked through a major ceremony, called apalacha. As noted in Chapter 10, this is seen as the more northerly equivalent of pucha, found on the Kendall River. It is based on a mytho-historical saga involving the travels of one or more apalacha men who witnessed various events and recorded them in songs and dances.

Sutton sees the membership of each estate as consisting of one or more patrilineages. He writes (in an unpublished ms.): "A lineage may have ten totems, for only two of which they own the increase centres; and they may own ten increase centres for only two of which they possess the totems." This is strikingly similar to the situation found within the coastal division of the KNg region. Certainly, it is closer to the latter than to the situation described by McConnel for the Archer River. In one case which Sutton records, one estate-owning lineage shares names and some 'totems' (ngatha kooenhiya) with another. The former has two 'increase centres' relating to the "freshwater shark" which is listed as its principal 'totem'. It also controls two other 'increase centres', both representing plant species which do not occur in the list of 12 'totems' which the lineage possesses. The other estate-owning lineage controls 5 'increase centres', none of which is related to "freshwater shark". Only one of the sites coincides with an item in the list of totems.

"Freshwater shark" is, in fact, 'totem' for at least six of the estate-owning units. Sharp might wish to see them as segments of a single clan, or members of the same phratry. However, only one of the units takes its name from this 'totem'; more systematically than the others, and reminiscent of the Archer River region in this respect, the shark is its principal 'totem'. Moreover, the 'increase centre' lies within its estate.

There are a number of similar cases recorded for the region. While there are elements which suggest the 'totemic complex' described for the Archer River, the pattern is generally more reminiscent of that found along the coast south of the Kendall. This impression is strengthened when one examines the extremely complex linguistic picture; and the pattern of marriages. 'Totem' exogamy is no more practised here than in the KNg region.

It seems justified, on the available evidence, to argue that the structural dichotomy between coast and inland is a general feature of the Wik region taken as a whole. The coastal Kugu-Nganychara need not be seen as an aberrant case; nor need they be linked more with people living further south (viz., Thaayorre, Yir-Yoront). Given that two differentiable patterns of social organization exist alongside each other, it seems useful to consider the reasons - environmental, demographic, economic, political, historical, etc. - which may be put forward to account for them, not only why they have come into being, but how they have been maintained in the face of strong interactional pressure.

It is not difficult to see why McConnel wished to see the differences in terms of consistency. The so-called 'totemic organizatio

of the inland people is more coherent; or, putting it another way, a number of symbolic and other systems neatly intersect. I am apt to talk of the coastal division as having systems which are "out-of-phase" with each other. However, to use terms such as consistent or inconsistent, coherent or incoherent, "in-phase" or "out-of-phase", is to adopt a synchronic perspective and to arrive at a simple typology. It does not lead to any understanding of the processes involved. If we wish to understand the how and the why it is necessary to adopt a more diachronic perspective, and to attempt to relate one order of phenomena with others.

Chapter 14 :

Conclusions

McConnel and Thomson were aware of the different patterns of social organization found within the Wik region, one located inland, the other on the coast (see especially McConnel 1936: 462-3). They represented the Wik-Mungkana (i.e., the inland division) as according with an Australian norm, and the coast as exhibiting "inconsistencies" and "variations". In fact, it can be argued that the supposed 'typicality' of WM "totemic culture", to use McConnel expression, provides the key to much of their analysis, and their predilection for studying the more disturbed Wik-Mungkana of the "inland" rather than the more numerous and less disturbed "coastal tribes". McConnel continually seems to wish to align the Wik-Mungkana with the classic Australian cases. She writes (1936: 456):

> My investigations in 1927 revealed the existence, previously unrecorded in the Peninsula, of a totemic culture resembling that of Central and other parts of Australia, including that of the Kariera in far West Australia. The chief characteristics of this culture are the existence of totemic centres ... at which "increase" ceremonies of the "Intichiuma" type are performed...

And, again (1936: 461-2):

> ... In 1935, Mr. T.G.H. Strehlow, whose scientific investigations have been carried out amongst the Arunta in Central Australia, commented upon the close resemblance between myth and ritual as found by him in Central Australia and as described by me in the Peninsula. My investigations in Cape York Peninsula confirm the prediction made by the late Dr. W.E. Roth that "subsequent enquiry may show that the various dances ... bear relationship to the totemic performances described by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen in Central Australia."

Having established the "norm" McConnel carried it with her like a yardstick (see for example, 1936: 463). A more helpful response by her would have been to examine the conditions under which this

"norm" could operate; and to determine whether it was possible (if her comparison with the Kariera and Aranda was apt) to generalize for a number of areas of Australia on the basis of the situation on the Peninsula as she observed it. Certainly, the environmental conditions under which the Wik-Mungkana conducted their daily living contrast strongly with those applying to the Kariera and to the Aranda. She describes the Wik-Mungkana as living in a very favourable environment (see, for example, McConnel 1936: 463; 1957: 1-2). Central Australia or the Pilbara region could hardly be described in these terms. Had she been able to conclude that a general type of Australian social organization operated without modification across a wide range of environmental conditions, her work would have represented a considerable achievement. The demonstration that a single form of social organization could operate independently of material conditions would have had major theoretical implications. Yet she proceeds in two entirely opposite directions, firstly, by attempting to account for precise social forms on the basis of utility or environmental aptness; and secondly, by introducing non-sociological factors, including environmental, and what might be termed genetico-historical considerations[1].

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1. As an example of the first type of explanation let me cite the following passage:

> ... My impression is that the coastal people, and the animals also perhaps, are less established in the narrower northern end of the Peninsula and so wander rather more restlessly than do the inland Wikmunkan, who occupy a very good locality and seem to be more deeply rooted to the soil (McConnel 1936: 463).

While the passage here might be interpreted as referring to the area of the Peninsula north of the Archer River, the following passage clearly bears on the coastal people south of the Archer, and provides a good example of explanations of the second type.

> The coastal people differ somewhat in physical appearance and temperament from the inland Wik-Munkan. Generally speaking, the hair of the coastal (cont.

While McConnel posits extensive Papuan influence especially north of the Archer River (see 1936: 452,454), it is likely that she herself would have found 'totemic organization' north of the Archer River more "normal" than that of the coastal Kugu-Nganychara (or, for that matter, of Wik-Ngathana and related people). The further south, and presumably the further away from disruptive Papuan influences, the more "aberrant" the situation appears to become. Moreover, she fails to account for the origins and the maintenance of these "aberrant forms" among people who, as I have already indicated, interact at a high level with the "normal" inland people. To come to grips with the problem of the differences in social (particularly 'totemic') organization between coast and inland, judgments of "aberrance" or "normalcy" should be suspended, and both divisions treated equally. Both situations require analysis and they should also be dealt with collectively for they constitute an interactive set. Should it be possible to put forward explanations covering both these situations, treated separately and together, they may serve as the first shaky foundations of a general approach to Australian social organization.

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1. (cont.) people is curly and often quite crisp, standing up off the head in a mass like that of the Papuans. There are, however, individuals with straight hair. The facial expression is more mobile.... In disposition they are more responsive and more temperamental than the Wik-Munkan. The latter have on the whole heavier features and their hair, usually curly or straight, is only rarely frizzy. These differences in type may be due to an intrusion of Papuans along the coast at some former time (1930: 99-100).

These explanations take on an ironic character when counterpoised against her criticism of Thomson for adducing historical factors to account for differences in kinship organization north and south of the Archer (McConnel 1936: 455-6). She cites Radcliffe-Brown approvingly in urging a sociological rather than an historical explanation.

As a first step I propose contrasting the coastal and inland divisions across a number of dimensions, bringing together and restating many of the points made both implicitly and explicitly in earlier chapters. I treat, within the limits of available information, both the Archer River and the KNg regions.

With respect to the environment, both divisions are subject to heavy seasonal flooding. Mobility is impaired both on the coast and inland. Resources are reduced in quantity and accessibility in both divisions during the wet season, though in terms of variety they may in fact be marginally greater during the wet than at other times of the year. This may partially compensate for the low yields. With respect to the choice of camp-sites, the range is reduced progressively through the dry season within the coastal division, and severely curtailed during the wet season for the inland. Indeed, the absence of information about wet season subsistence strategies for the inland remains one of the most serious gaps in our knowledge of the Wik region.

The most crucial points of comparison between the two divisions with respect to economic life appear to be these:

Environment and economy

Coastal	Inland
great environmental diversity (with many micro-environments) over short distances	low environmental diversity (with few micro-environments) over long distances
many food resources, with marked seasonal variability in population numbers, and numbers of species available	fixed (and relatively small) range of food resources with little seasonal variation in population numbers, and numbers of species available
wide range of hunting techniques, and strategies geared to specific resources, varying according to seasonal and environmental conditions	small repertoire of exploitative techniques, relatively unchanging throughout the year (exception: fish poisoning during kay.man)

marked alternation between abundances and shortages in food resources	peaks and lows less marked tha coast with respect to availabl resources; more stable econom
localized concentrations of particular resources	generalized distribution of resources
water shortages during late dry season	no water shortages throughout year
high carrying capacity	low carrying capacity
low reliability of resources (relative)	high reliability of resources (relative)

In some ways, it is useful to conceive of the coastal economy as being specific or specialized in character (in fact, composed of a multiplicity of economies geared towards particular seasonal and environmen conditions) and the inland economy as being general in character.

Expressed in social terms, the consequences of these statement are quite marked. With respect to the inland economy, survival depends basically on the area of exploitable environment available as against the numbers of exploiters. Each unit of the habitat will provide, by and large, the same resources in the same quantities throughout the year. Other crucial factors are the efficiency of extractive techniques, conservation procedures, distances involved, the preparedness of people to shift camp from preferred locations, and the maintenance of breeding populations (or other mechanisms which maintain animal populations, e.g., migration) to ensure continued food supplies. For the coast the situation is vastly more complex. Each individual requires access to resources which are not stable (or do not approach stability) throughout the year. These resources are found in different environments, in highly variable numbers, at different times of the year. The extractive techniques involve differing deployments of manpower, ranging from single individuals to large numbers, e.g., as involved in wallaby

drives and fish poisoning. It is notable that the size of the exploiting unit can be expected to be relatively stable inland, or at least this option is available. It is also worth noting that those economic activities which do require concentrations of manpower and which do involve people from the inland tend to occur on the line of junction between the two divisions, or within the coastal division. Inland, the bodies of water are generally too large to poison; and wallaby drives are probably impossible without major shifts of environment, e.g., from open plain to closed forest. That is, there need to be focusing points to which the animals may be directed.

In the coastal division, the size of the exploiting unit varies considerably. In terms of local organization, the range of possible camp-sites is large, and there are many situations in which high concentrations of extremely localized resources could sustain large populations for shorter or longer periods. However, with the exception of certain key camp-sites, relatively few in number and often at river mouths, from which people could exploit the surrounding countryside without being required to move too frequently, there was a general exigency to move from site to site, admittedly within a fairly small ambit. People then were either playing host or being hosted.

This raises the question of land tenure and the nature of estates. The similarities and differences are summarized below.

Estates

Coastal	Inland
small and non-uniform in area	large and uniform in area
some estates discontinuous in character	no estates discontinuous in character

some estates have major focal site; others have poorly defined focal site	sometimes difficult to establish a single focal site (often a number of focal sites)
political importance of the estate corporation reflected in the importance of the focal site; lack of focal site probably indicates low political status	political importance of the estate corporation not always reflected as directly in the importance of the focal site
awu tend to be clustered at or near focal sites	awu tend to be clustered at or near focal sites
focal sites constitute more or less permanent camp-sites (i.e., subject to lengthy and regular occupation)	focal sites constitute more or les: permanent camp-sites (i.e., subjec to lengthy and regular occupation)

It is important along the coast to distinguish between what we might call real as opposed to nominal estates. Real estates are those which offer the possibility of lengthy, regular (perhaps permanent) occupation; nominal estates may consist of only a few named sites, perhaps none of which may be classified as agu kunyji. They have the appearance of being allocated "under sufferance", or to satisfy, on the one hand, the residual claims of particular individuals to a particular area of country or, on the other, the aspiration of an individual or sets of individuals to set up his (or their) independent sphere of action. They often lack any meaningful major camp-site (i.e., agu nhakun a'e). There is an obvious correlation between the importance of a camp-site and the political status of its "boss". A major camp-site may be important because a prominent "boss man" lives there regularly or habitually; conversely, potential "boss men" are advantaged by having control over a prominent camp-site.

Inland, the distinction between real and nominal estates is probably not applicable. Estates tend to be roughly equivalent, in fact as well as formally. Although no precise mapping work has been carried out, it appears that, inland, estates are roughly of

the same size. Moreover, I have the impression that there is less tendency, in general conversation, to refer to major camp-sites. People refer to rivers, either by a general name, to one of its characteristic associations (e.g., the place or river lined with bullrushes, the place or river lined with such and such species of tea-trees) or to its "creator" (e.g., the place where crocodile walked about)[1]. One camp-site may not be favoured over another (although camp-sites on the western margin are often associated with specialist resources). Certainly a large number of well-watered sites are offering, even in the height of the dry season.

This raises a problem: If there are a number of camp-sites of equivalent value within the inland estates, why is it that estate corporations do not segment in the same way as appears to be the case on the coast? This question is difficult to answer. On the surface men seeking independent niches within the inland division would appear to have an easier task than men on the coast. A number of reasons can be suggested:

(1) Inland estates are large; to visit people encamped in distant estates may involve considerable journeys, especially in comparison with the coastal situation. Two consequences flow from this. Firstly, it suggests a situation of low sociability such that individuals may be forced back into the "social hearth" of the main residential group. Secondly, defensibility may be a crucial question for inland groups. The situation is one of

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1. I make these remarks rather tentatively for certain lagoons (e.g., ku'a-awa, just off the Archer River) and crossings (e.g., thaha-pul.n, on the Kendall River) continually crop up in conversations.

   Against this it is less common inland to have a whole area referred to by a single named site located within it, as is the case with waalang, thugu, yangku, etc. on the coast.

small population and large estates. They do not have the security of a dense population of kin and others with local loyalties to buffer them against incursions by outsiders. In these circumstances, residential groups may tend to remain generally larger and more stable than coastal groups.

(2) A more compelling argument, it seems to me, is that if the process of segmentation (or exclusion) is observed closely in the coastal division, politically junior or aspiring individuals are not allowed access to or are relegated to minor positions within major camp-sites; the sites where they might hope to set up independent niches are invariably classified as nhampa woonyo, "small name". Important sites are simply (and by definition) not available in great numbers. Signifying this, if a politically aspiring individual carves out a niche for himself it is never (at least in his own mind) at the expense of relinquishing claims in the major site. It is there that he will hope to gain pre-eminence at some time in the future, either in his own right or through his children. The more general situation is where a politically powerful individual, occupying a prominent site, literally pushes people out - to the margins of the major camp-site, and to the margins of the estate as a whole.

Inland, the political options seem different. Indeed, it would appear that political rivalries could be fought out within the estate without provoking major social changes. For example, a junior brother could camp at a separate (though equally viable) camp-site. Others could follow him in a major political realignment. If the older brother then chose to follow the younger brother, his political status might well be impaired; however, the exigencies

of the kinship system would allow him to exercise certain rights (including jural authority) over his younger sibling. Given the flexibility of the estate itself, conflict situations might have much less enduring consequences. This argument is confirmed by the general impression one receives throughout the Wik region that prominent "boss men" do not emerge inland, but rather are a strictly coastal phenomenon. (It may also be reflected in many of the stories recorded by McConnel which involve "intra-clan" conflicts, resolved by the protagonists choosing to settle at - for them - differently favoured locations within the same estate.)

I have already noted that on the coast in the KNg region uterine ties tend to be maximized to a higher degree than inland. At one level, this reflects the residence patterns of younger married men who often spend part of the year in their wife's estate. Among the coastal Kugu-Nganychara at least there are strong injunctions against distant marriages. Distance is defined essentially on spatial grounds. While there are a number of marriages recorded linking "Christmas Creek" and "Thuuk River", marriages generally do not extend beyond this range, either north or south, along the coast. This would appear to be the maximum-type range. The distance involved is about 40 km. There is plenty of evidence to confirm that people spent part of the year in the estate of their spouse, even if it lay at this distance. Indeed, children often grew up knowing much more about their mother's rather than their father's estate.

Now, inland, we know that there are only four estates lying either on or between "Thuuk River" and "Christmas Creek" (see Map 4). This number increases by perhaps two if we also include the head-

waters of these streams, which lie at 60-70 km. from the coast. Within the coastal division, on the other hand, I have recorded upwards of twenty estates. Thus, it is not difficult to calculate that the range of social options is very much greater on the coast than inland. This clearly produces situations, inland, in which men may look considerable distances away to marry. For example, marriages between Wik-Iiyanh and Kaanychu, Ayopath or Pakanh speakers are not rare. The further one moves inland the more distantly are people obliged to marry, simply as a function of the size of estates.

In any conflict situation which occurs within the coastal division, individuals may call for assistance from uterine and other close kin as a matter of course. One common response after a conflict situation is for a man to retreat to his mother's country. There he can be assured of a warm, affectionate welcome. Inland, this situation is less likely to obtain, though for people whose father has married towards the coast the possibility remains more certainly than if he had married inland. Inland, distance is a crucial factor, for it limits movements in and out of the estate, and constrains the degree to which kin ties not actually operable within the camp situation can be put to work. People may never get to see their mother's country. Thus, coast and inland stand in marked contrast.

It is perhaps not surprising to find on the coast individuals making claims to their mother's country; of deriving their spirits from awu in their mother's country; and being born, in a very high proportion of cases, in their mother's country. These phenomena are all well attested from this division. However, the more one moves inland, the more, I hypothesize, ties with mother's estates will be ignored.

Of course, the crucial fact in this analysis is whether claims to mother's estates can ever be realized. On the coast it appears that estates fell vacant sufficiently often for such claims to have operational value. In the data for the coastal division a number of estates have fallen vacant. The evidence confirms the fact that claims through M (either to MF's or, more remotely, to MM's country) are invoked before other claims. Moreover, estates need not be vacant before claims are operationalized. As we have observed in Chapter 9, men may choose to live out their lives basically in their mother's estate for various political reasons. In another, though apparently exceptional case (noted in Chapter 11), members of one estate acknowledge a man linked to the estate through his mother as "biggest boss". Inland, we simply do not know, although McConnel seems assured that clans or local groups are by and large enduring. If estates do fall vacant more commonly on the coast than inland (and this is my own surface impression from talking to informants), an explanation would have to be offered.

There are in fact several possible explanations. Firstly, the phenomenon may be more apparent than real. In other words, the sample of inland estates is so low that even with an equivalent rate of turnover over a long period of time, no estate may be vacant at the moment of observation. Vacancies will occur along the coast more frequently and more observably, since the sample is considerably greater. There are other, not necessarily contradictory explanations. On the one hand, the apparent failure of inland estates to segment (or to fall vacant) means that the size of the estate membership will tend to be larger than for the coast. On the other hand, life along the coast is almost certainly more dangerous and violent than life inland. The coast presents a more dangerous set of

natural hazards than the inland which is more benign. Moreover, the higher rate of interaction among the coastal people lends itself more to deaths by violent means (and accusations of sorcery) than life inland. Many more spearings are included in case histories for the coastal division than inland, and population pressure can no doubt be considered as a general factor. It should be borne in mind that the lower population inland would mean that the incidence of spearings would be lower in any case, even given an equivalent rate.

People all comment on the high level of violence in the pre-mission days. As they say, "People quick to temper". Sharp's comments about the feeling of calm and security of coastal wet season camps among the Yir-Yoront are interesting in this respect (Sharp 1937: 13-14). He writes:

> The wet conditions during the summer which prevent large gatherings of people also make visiting between the small settlements difficult and rare ...
>
> ... No one need suspect a fellow camper plotting revenge or malevolent magic and there need be no fear of marauding strangers or of roving visitors of distant relationship and doubtful friendliness. Relationships within each group are known. Friction between members of such a group is reduced to a minimum and disturbances are limited to minor domestic quarrels, soon adjusted and forgotten. Violent fighting is practically unknown during the summer months. Each encampment lives largely to itself....

Sharp's description could probably with little modification be applied to inland camps throughout the year rather than just the wet season. Distance rather than water serves as the barrier. The large dry season camps, frequently involving ceremonial activities and located on the coastline or at the western margin of the inland estates, may include inland people within the camp population, but

they do not generally occur further inland. It is notable that there is no major ceremony held within the heartland of any inland estate of the KNg region[1]. The conclusion of even relatively minor ceremonies (e.g., the final disposal of mummified bodies) was always fraught with conflict. Major spearfights are often said to have erupted,sometimes with fatal consequences. Conversely, the coordination of the ceremonies always required delicate diplomacy and on an agreed period of truce.

The argument which I tentatively put forward on the basis of the above discussion is that the difference in 'totemic organization' between coast and inland - using the degree of coincidence of awu and kam waya (puul waya and awa) to index the difference - relates to more broadly-defined differences in social organization. They arise in large measure, as I see it, out of environmental considerations and, flowing from these, the greater chances presented to individuals on the coast to achieve a degree of economic, political and social (i.e., residential) independence if they wish and provided they possess the necessary personal qualities. Expressed in terms of the inland division, these differences in social organization bear on the following:

(1) the large size of estates;

(2) the relatively low rate of social interaction;

(3) local group autarchy (as a function of distance and the need for security);

(4) the limits imposed on individual entrepreneurs;

(5) the relatively slow rate of perceivable social change (as

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1. The same may be true of the Archer River region. McConnel records that the winychinama ceremony occurred on the coast, at yaan.ng.

a function of few estates and low population densities (cf. the coast which has many estates and high population density); and

(6) a more ordered, regular, less dangerous existence.

I do not wish it to be thought that I see the difference between the two divisions as essentially a difference in kind; rather it is one of rate. Inland, social life *gives the appearance of* moving slowly, both from within and to the observer looking from the outside. The slower the rate of change, the greater the chances of making readjustments in the social order at the level of conceptualization and symbolism. Ideology and actuality can be *made* to coincide. (Later I argue that people of the coastal division decide not to make them coincide.)

This is only a partial formulation, and it must remain somewhat speculative in the absence of detailed historical, demographic and other data. This is especially true of the inland division. In many cases (including, unfortunately, much of the Archer River) existing gaps may no longer be able to be filled.

I wish to look now, in very general terms, at the nature of awu/awa and kam waya/puul waya. From a Kugu-Nganychara perspective the morality of any situation is always assessed on its power to endure. The strongest statement which an individual can make is to say that something has been so for as long as anyone can remember - "from start." Thus occupancy and use can establish strong precedents. I have noted already that awu tend to be associated with major camp-sites (even though the awu itself may be classified as agu panych and subject to rigorously-controlled access). If events or habitual

occurrences are to be linked with particular sites, they are far more likely to be linked with sites which themselves are habitually occupied or used than sites which are visited only occasionally. Moreover, it is in the same circumstances of constant or recurrent use or occupancy that associations are likely to be called to mind, invoked, reworked. Consequently, it is not surprising that awu tend to cluster at the major camp-sites[1].

As we have already noted in Chapter 9, the spirits of children (pukpe nhepe) are normally transmitted into the mother via the father by the "spirits" (i.e., the spirits of the deceased) who frequent awu within the estate of the father. In this sense, spirits are "sent" from awu. Moreover, when a person dies, the spirit of the deceased is directed towards a prominent camping place (usually associated with one or two awu) or an awu within his or her estate. It is such spirits who "send" the spirits; and who, also, "chase" or "frighten" the awu to spread the plant, animal or other species with which it is associated. The control the deceased ancestors exert is very similar if not the same as that exerted by the living. If the living are to maintain those phenomena which are habitually associated with the estate, they are obliged to lead moral lives (and thereby fulfil their responsibilities to

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1. In this connexion it is interesting to recall that when giving nesting behaviour of birds my informant invariably linked birds first with his "home" if it were in fact a breeding place. Birds were classified as breeding there "from start" or breeding there "come lately." If they continue to breed there it can be expected that in time they will be re-classified as breeding there "from start." The site can be described as minha-awu, the place where the bird always breeds, or is to be observed or found. If the bird can be singled out as identified with this place in some special way, or if it is to be found here and not elsewhere, it may be seen variously as coming under the control of those people who are "boss" for the site (and their ancestors if they, too, were "boss" of the site) and as identifying these people in some way.

their ancestors). The well-being of the estate depends on it.

It is not surprising that people should be associated with phenomena which habitually occur within their estate, particularly in conjunction with those camp-sites where social life is conducted most actively. The more distinctive the association the more likely it is that it will be invoked. We have already observed how the presence of a tree in which eagles regularly nest is singled out as an awa at meeRokm on the Archer River. The bird is habitually associated with the site, and its "boss" takes the name of the bird as his nickname. Formally, this appears no different from the practice of naming a swamp after a prominent solitary tree found at its centre, or naming any site after one of its prominent features.

It is notable that among the Kugu-Nganychara dogs and people often take their names from place names, especially awu, as well as, and more habitually, from kam waya. It is a short step to taking over phenomena associated with the site (particularly ready-made associations as encapsulated in awu) as kam waya themselves[1]. It

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1. Awu themselves can be seen as encapsulating or recording associations of various kinds. On the surface, these association may be represented as linking an animal (or any other phenomenon) and a place. However, contrary to Radcliffe-Brown's or McConnel's claims that this association is based on environmental aptness, I would argue that these associations, regardless of how they are characterized by one's informants, are not direct or inherent. In short, they are not a property of the phenomenon represented. I argue that the association is always established by people, not by the phenomenon. It can easily be observed that two arguments, opposite in character but producing the same result, will justify the assignation of an awu to a particular phenomenon at a particular place. One is based on habitude. In other words, the phenomenon is always to be observed at such and such a particular place. Here environmental aptness merely stands in an epiphenomenal relationship both to the phenomenon represented and to the awu itself. The second argument is based on the extraordinary or the unusual (cont.)

is perhaps for this reason that, in the inland division, kam waya/puul waya tend to be linked with awu/awa; but that, at least in the inland division of the KNg region, and by comparison with the kam waya - awu correlation, awu are less likely to be linked with kam waya. In other words, the latter are likely to trail somewhat behind the coming-into-being of the former, in the same way that what I have described as the 'monumentalisation' of a "big man" in a ceremony comes somewhat after him (and may collapse him and a number of other "bosses" into a single historical figure)[2].

I have earlier postulated reasons why awu and kam waya should remain relatively "in-phase" within the inland division

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1. (cont) occurrence - the presence of a particular phenomenon at a particular place where it is never normally observed; a particular species behaving oddly; the coincidental appearance of a particular phenomenon and some grave or conspicuous event which occurs in the course of social life. In other words, the phenomenon stands for something unusual or significant, or both. This latter argument is exactly the one given by certain lay anthropologists (and also given to me by Cape York Peninsula aborigines visiting the city) that certain prominent features of the landscape (or cityscape) must by necessity constitute sites of special significance.

Awu always record a human or cultural event, never anything which can adequately be expressed as a "natural occurrence". In this sense, the Aboriginal gloss, "story-place", is very accurate. The notion also highlights a crucial difference in Wik as opposed to European thinking. Whereas Europeans will almost always attribute the unusual or the bizarre or the inexplicable to nature (or to supernatural forces) the Wik will always attribute it to human intervention, either from the living or the dead. In all the accounts available for the creation of awa/awu, in the Archer River or the KNg regions, they are always "left" by people. McConnel's (and Thomson's) and my data all agree on this point.

It should not cause any surprise that awu are often environmentally "apt", for this simply reflects the higher statistical chances of a phenomenon being observed either in a habitual or an unfamiliar guise in its customary habitat than elsewhere.

2. Kam waya may also trail behind awu, but in a different sense. After an awu has ceased to have any "living" significance - and important awu are always classified as "living" sites - (cont

and tend to be "out-of-phase" within the coastal division. They represent different social responses - not necessarily different in kind but different in rate - to different environmental conditions. I wish now to raise a complicating issue.

Apart from the differences in economy and social organization (especially with respect to local organization and patterns of residence), the coast offers an extreme diversity of languages/dialects; by contrast, the inland division appears to offer a very low diversity. Inland, the range of mutual intelligibility may be 200 km. or more, from the Archer River to south of the Edward River; and perhaps 100 km. or more on an east-west axis. By comparison, within the coastal division the limits of intelligibility probably do not exceed, along a north-south axis, a range of 80 km. For particular individuals the range may be massively skewed in one or other direction, e.g., 70 km. to the north, 10 km. to the south. This skewing will reflect the directionality of social interaction. The latter does not account for the diversity, or serve to maintain it[1].

Within the coastal division of the KNg region, diversity is not only tolerated, it is actively sponsored. In matters of

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2. (cont) the kam waya and the personal names which arose from the association of particular people with them may continue on, in much the same way as many of us with names which are derived from place names continue to bear the name while being ignorant of the place to which, at one time, it properly referred.

1. It should be recalled that each riverine system will be marked by high diversity at one end, and low diversity at the other. Yet patterns of social interaction have been demonstrated as operating intensely within such systems, at least in the KNg region.

language or dialect, people point to and base distinctions on the slightest variations imaginable; and as I hypothesized elsewhere (see Chapter 10, p. 326), each local group - and, refining the hypothesis further, each "big man" - moves in the direction of linguistic distinctiveness. I have noted elsewhere (Chapter 11) that there is a strong stress on individual rights and on individuation. This is reflected in phenomena other than language, e.g., nowadays it is expressed in the singular and distinctive shapes into which "cowboy hats" are moulded, and the elaboration of decorative details: bands, studs, badges, personal names and printed epithets (e.g., "Billy Bushman, Rough Rider" or "Kingy Stockman, Bull Tosser"). The idiosyncratic is the norm, not the exception. The guiding principle is "style" - i.e., developing one's own distinctive persona or image.

However, a problem emerges immediately from this discussion. Does this "passion for difference", as it might be called, "infect" the whole region, or is it confined to the coastal division? If not, why should linguistic uniformity characterize the inland division against pressures which, in the coastal division, apparently produce extreme linguistic diversity?

I shall attempt to answer both questions simultaneously. One possibility can be ruled out of account almost immediately, viz., that objective differences between the speech habits of the "inside people" are, in fact, as great as those operating on the coast, yet they are not culturally marked or recognized. Two objections can be raised against this proposition: firstly, because there is little objective evidence to support it; and secondly, even if the evidence were strong, the argument would beg the question

of why the differences should be culturally marked in one division and not in the other. A second argument which might be employed would be similar to one already used in another connexion, viz., that the number of local groups speaking Wik-Iiyanh is relatively small (and the same is also true to a degree for Wik-Mungkana). Moreover, although the speech habits of members of different estates may not distinguish them to the degree that Kugu-Mu'inh is different from Kugu-Uwanh, they nevertheless are distinctive. This argument may help put the whole discussion in better perspective, for there are in fact only 7 or 8 functioning estates speaking Wik-Iiyanh, and some of them are clearly separable on objective linguistic grounds (as well as according to local classifications). Against this, Kugu-Mu'inh is the primary dialect spoken by members of 6 estate corporations; Kugu-Muminh by 4 corporations; Kugu-Uwanh by 2 corporations; Kugu-Ugbanh by 1 corporation; and Kugu-Mangk by 2 corporations. The large area occupied by Wik-Iiyanh and Wik-Mungkana on maps showing language distributions may disguise their relatively few speakers. However, even taking this fact into account, it can be stated, firstly, that they do have a large number of speakers in comparison with *many* of the coastal dialects/languages; that they occupy generally a continuous tract of country (although by and large poorly populated); that they are contiguous to each other; that they share close genetic links; and that with the exception of one or two local groups in the lower Kirke River-Knox River region, they are not spoken on the coast. It is possible to conclude, on the basis of these remarks, that Wik-Iiyanh and Wik-Mungkana do differ (though not in any radical sense), on both qualitative and quantitative grounds, from languages/dialects which are confined to the coast.

The third possibility (though tempered by the preceding discussion which suggests that the difference, on linguistic grounds, may not be as great as it appears on the surface) is that people located on the coast and those located inland do in fact "see" both themselves and each other somewhat differently. This is easily confirmed, not only by the clearly-articulated dichotomy between "top-end" and "beach-side", but in the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours which people consciously associate with one or other side of the division.

Some have already been mentioned at various points in the text:

1. Coastal people hold to the view that kam waya and awu need not coincide (and are, in fact, expected not to coincide) within the coastal division. However, they are the first to argue that inland the two are (and should be) "all-in-one".
2. Songs composed by inland people stressing their difference from and superiority over the coastal people.
3. The recognition of environmental and dietary differences (people from the lower Kirke River refer to the "top-end" people or "Wik-Mungkana fellas" as "sugarbag-egg-eaters").
4. The exclusively coastal character of the major ceremonial sagas. In fact, in the wanam saga, the kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers create the coastal plain carving it out from the "timber country" (see Chapter 10), i.e., excising it from the "inside" people.
5. In support, it might also be possible to enlist McConnel's rather psychologically-oriented remarks, recorded earlier (p. 528-9, footnote 1), concerning differences in temperament

(and appearance) between coast and inland people.

These statements, while confirming that people within each division see the others as virtually a "race apart", do not in fact say anything about how they see themselves; or whether they differ in terms of degree of personal individuation.

To pursue this matter I wish to take up the question of ceremonial life. I have noted at several points that the winychinama ceremony, recorded by McConnel for the Archer River and known to people of the KNg region, has an entirely different structure from the wanam-kunalam-munka congeries of ceremonies. Even as described by KNg informants the winychinama ceremony (to retain the WM term) involves each clan or even phratry (to use these terms in the senses employed by Sharp; see above, Chapter 13) in performances of dances relating to one or more of its principal kam waya/puul waya (e.g., flying-fox, bonefish). Sometimes two or more clans or phratries (or totemic corporations, as they might more cautiously be described) may be engaged in dances expressing ritualised conflict (e.g., possum versus wild dog). There is a general sense, throughout the Wik region, that winychinama is an inland ceremony. This undoubtedly relates to its structure and conceptual framework rather than to the question of leadership/control or the site(s) at which it is performed. The latter may, more often than not, have been located in the coastal division; and the notion of "field boss" or a single controlling individual is less clearly articulated than for the more clearly coastal ceremonies.[1] Indeed, the ceremony appears to be non-localised in character so the question of titular as opposed to effective leadership (a question raised first in

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1. This is not true south of Edward River where it was a simple matter to determine the leadership of withirma, an equivalent ceremony.

Chapter 10 and dealt with again in Chapter 11) does not arise here. This contrasts strongly with the coastal division where the ceremonies come under the effective (but culturally recognized and approved) leadership of powerful men who may or may not also be the titular leaders. These ceremonies are localised; and they do not invoke clan- or phratry-type structures. Significantly, also, they do not invoke the notion of moieties which are prominent, if they are ever prominent in the Wik region, precisely in the context of the winychinama ceremony. In short, winychinama focuses on structures; the coastal ceremonies focus on powerful individuals. This dichotomy in ceremonial life coincides with a distinction which is observable at a more quotidian level. In the KNg region, powerful individuals exert their influence over social groupings which are wider than simply the estate corporation, and consist of more than those people camped at any one time on a site(s) located within their particular estate. These prominent men may control a whole lower river system or COMPANY. In certain circumstances, their authority may extend even wider.

Within the inland division, powerful men of this type do not seem to emerge. Estates which lie on the eastern edge of the COMPANY seem to occupy a rather marginal position vis-à-vis its coastal members. Within any COMPANY arrangement its members are almost certain to constitute a minority; yet they control their estate in a manner which is hardly conceivable for people on the lower river. In short, they exercise a degree of exclusivity that most coastal people could hardly match. While they can retreat to the security of their own heartland, this is not possible for the coastal people who are never more than five or six hours' walk from the most distant members of the lower river system

which they share. The individual from the coast must continue to cope with the flux of daily life. Even the prominent man who may wish, from time to time, to isolate himself, does so at the risk of compromising his position. Conversely, the senior male of an inland estate will seldom be able to establish an enduring social field, composed of members of a number of closely-interacting estates, in order to achieve pre-eminence or to be able to assert it. In short, he may never become the centre of a personality-cult; however, he may not feel the need quite as keenly as his coastal neighbours, to assert himself and to assure himself of his own distinctiveness. To establish his sense of self he need only retreat; the coastal man must assert.

This argument could be put another way. In the coastal division, the extreme flexibility of environmental and social options can easily be seen reflected in a style of confronting the world, both at the level of practice and at the level of ideas[1]. At this second level, the "style" constitutes an ideology, which, once it has taken shape, then becomes part of the new material conditions in which human being operate. At that point considerations of rationality and irrationality become largely meaningless. The response to the world is created; and it in turn creates a world in which it will endlessly reproduce itself. If it is mal-adaptive its practitioners will simply disappear.

Inland, the response is integrative; elements are drawn together so that they are "all in one". Simple organizing principles

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1. The ideational system held by any individual is of course not to be divorced from but exists itself only as an act and a product of praxis - the act of thinking, being in the world, and reflexions on praxis.

such as descent constructs may be invoked. On the coast such constructs are likely to succumb to a variety of disintegrative pressures - environmental, demographic, economic, political, ideological, and so on. Cognates may be a more pertinent notion than agnates.

Current practice confirms this analysis. Within the Wik region, and looking at the contemporary situation, it seems that the capacity of the inland groups to organize themselves at anything other than a local group level seems limited. By contrast, the coastal groups throughout the region have shown the capacity to organize relatively large and complex congeries of people. These are often referred to as "mobs" or "companies". These larger groupings are particularly conspicuous in two fields of endeavour: the organization of ceremonies, or ceremony-related activities; and in the establishment of "outstations" or decentralised communities. In recent years, increasing numbers of people have moved out of the settlements at Aurukun and more recently from Edward River. As these movements first constituted themselves, the congeries of people involved bore the appearance of the main ceremonial groupings - apalacha (Kirke River), pucha (Kendall River) and wanam ("Holroyd" - "Christmas Creek") - each under the leadership of its respective "field boss". As the movement began to gain impetus, these wider groupings began to segment, not on the basis of estates, but into more closely-knit and localised riverine groupings - apalacha; other people began to organize themselves also on the basis of riverine "companies". Thus, north of the Kendall River, groups were established at the mouth of the Love River; on the Kirke River; at the mouth of Knox Creek; and on the northern bank of

the Kendall itself. South of the Kendall outstation, camps were proposed for a number of major sites, one in each of the zones delineated in the earlier analysis: near kuli-aynychan on the south bank of the lower Kendall; at pu'an in the "Thuuk River" zone; at thampenych, at the mouth of the "Holroyd"; and at waalang. Camps have now been established, some of them only this year, at each of these sites. Each of them consists of a composite residential group in which leadership is clearly defined. In short, the analysis of traditional practice could serve as a basis to predict contemporary practice.

In Chapter 12 I asked whether the differences between the Archer River and the KNg region lay at the surface or at a deeper structural level. The answer to that question has been delayed by the fact that the comparison must properly be conducted only within the inland division. Having established this principle, it is safe to conclude that the two (sub-) regions are very similar indeed.

However, the question can now be re-located. Do the differences which exist between the two divisions operate at the surface, or in fact be at the level of deep structure? Two responses are possible. Firstly, there are grounds for suggesting that the variations are more than superficial phenomena. Secondly, given that patterns of interaction cut across the dichotomy created by Wik people at a conceptual level, there are grounds for suggesting that they represent variations on a set of common themes. I attempt, on this basis, to spell out a more general model of social organization, taking into account both divisions, and the conditions under which ideology and actuality might conjoin. I will adknowledge, in advance,

that the model is likely to be geared more to the coast than the inland, for it is with this division that I am most familiar, and most closely identified in the field. (In this respect it may help counterbalance what I would call the "inland perspective" of McConnel and Thomson). Its major elements are:

1. The notion of patrifiliation is firmly locked into Wik ideology. In general, men are seen to inherit the important aspects of their identity from their fathers (and women from their fathers and their father's sisters). The logic is that men should live and die in their own "country". In this way their personal identity is most clearly and unambiguously expressed.

2. The notions of seniority and juniority are also firmly locked into the ideology. This means that men in a senior generation have authority over men in a junior generation; and within the same generation senior men have authority over junior men. Within a patrilineal descent group this means that fathers have authority over their sons; older brothers have authority over younger brothers; and the sons of older fathers (pibi ngathu manu thayan, "My father comes first; he is biggest brother") have authority over the sons of junior fathers (pibi nhingu koyam, "His father behind" i.e., younger brother).

3. A third aspect of the ideology is that each man should stand for himself. This does not mean that he should not be eligible for the support of his family. Ideology also states that such support, except in the most exceptional circumstances, should be forthcoming immediately and without question. However, each man is entitled to his own viewpoint; and this stress on individual

rights (and accountability) has as its corollary a desire on the part of individuals to establish their own sphere of influence. This desire places the solidary character of descent groups in jeopardy.

4. Reality joins ideology when a strong individual, with the structurally ascribed status of senior male, takes up residence on the major or focal site (i.e., agu nhampa a'e) in his own estate. In ideal circumstances he may never be called upon to move; or he may move very little, responding only to seasonal abundances at different localities within his own estate, or seeking an occasional change of scene. With respect to ceremonial life, a local ceremony may grow up under his tutelage. At the very least he could serve as guarantor of the particular component within an inter-group or composite ceremony (of the winychin.m-type) which represents him, his estate, and his cultural symbols (of which of course it is itself one). If this pattern were able to establish itself at all times and in all places there is no reason why cultural items should not remain "in-phase" with each other; in other words, language, agu kunyji ('heartland'), awu, kam waya, "story", songs, dances, ceremonies, "body paint" designs, and so on would remain "all-in-one". In these circumstances, another aspect of the ideology would be continuously re-affirmed, viz., the belief that individuals do not create, they simply maintain: "This no more make up; this from start."

However, there are a number of factors limiting the durability of this situation:

1. The "boss" must be able to attract sufficient people around him to sustain a viable social universe;
2. His estate must be able to sustain the resident population

through all periods of the year;

3. He must achieve transference of his authority to his eldest son before he dies.

These conditions are probably more easily met inland for reasons that I have already expounded; and they most likely coincide with a strong sense of local corporate identity. On the coast the conditions are less easily met, for variability and population pressure mean that a rational allocation of resources can rarely be achieved. In this situation some sites are more strategic than others. The focal male of the estate corporation which controls such sites is well situated to exert a controlling influence over the whole riverine system, in environmental terms, or COMPANY, in social terms. The character of the occupational site may take on the persona of this focal male. His situation is formally similar to that of the focal male outlined in the case above; but any ceremony with which he is associated is unlikely to be of the winychin.m-type. There is little question that strong individuals arise from time to time, and may actually seize strategic sites. These individuals may establish a new orthodoxy for a whole sub-region; they have a whole riverine system at their disposition. The ceremonies which arise beside them or under their tutelage will possess the character of personality cults rather than expressing, in a formal manner, the inter-relationships between equivalent or equal social units (viz., the estate-based 'clan'). Such figures are the political leaders of COMPANIES, and the "field bosses" of COMPANY-based ceremonies. Current "field bosses" behave exactly as their presumed antecedents are reported to have behaved in the past.

Both Thomson and McConnel showed an unwillingness or an incapacity to go beyond formal accounts of social organization for the Wik area. This is clearly exemplified by McConnel who used mytho-historical accounts as constituting the main bulk of her evidence on daily social life. Moreover, it is a mistake to depend on the conscious model(s) propounded by informants to serve as one's own explanatory model.

I have argued that it is not useful to conceive of the Wik region as comprising discrete solidary units, fixed and unchanging through time. In the KNg region political life is intense. It operates essentially at the level of families, or family-based structures. The latter are non-enduring but complex. Any individual has ties with his father's and his mother's kin. Both sets of kin are activated from time to time, and depending on circumstances. These alternating strategies cut across simple unilineal descent constructs. Moreover, in wishing to transmit his patrimony to his son, a man places familial loyalties ahead of descent group loyalties. Consequently, the researcher must examine intra-group as well as inter-group relationships (and politics).

It is always difficult to know at which level to approach Aboriginal social organization. I spelt out some of my own views on this question in Chapter 11. It seems to me, taking up issues which were not raised in that discussion, that anthropological writings on Aboriginal societies are beleaguered by two main problems. The first is the continual reification of the notion of tribe; and its labelling by means of some linguistic tag. While decrying the practice, I face the problem of putting foward positive alternatives. My own thoughts on the matter are that the

unit for study should meet at least one requirement: that it is large enough to admit the observation of processes through time. The tribe (as linguistic unit) is, in fact, subject to one of the possible processes to be observed, viz., the process of linguistic change. Observation becomes methodologically impossible unless the context is sufficiently broadly defined so that the process may be "located."

The Wik region constitutes a broad physical and social universe. Its utility as a unit of study might be enhanced were it expanded to include the headwaters of the Archer and the Kendall-Holroyd Rivers. It would be interesting to know whether a third pattern of social organization exists among those people who traditionally spoke Kaanychu and Ay.path, the languages of the interior, and whether this pattern coincides with a second important division, structurally as significant as that now recorded between coast and inland. The present utility of the unit selected is that it does allow processes at the level of these two divisions to be examined.

The second besetting problem is the tendency to treat local organization and social organization as the one and the same issue. Put another way, the social system is simply confused with a land-based system. The procedure seems to be as follows: first, isolate a tract of land which then becomes a 'tribal' territory; then, divide the tract of land into a number of small units (estates) which are owned by a social group (clan). These become the two main levels of analysis. Sometimes the procedure moves in the opposite direction - from tribe to territory; and from clan to estate. These are very naive procedures. One consequence is that

estates are treated as not only formally equivalent, but equivalent in fact; the second is that they lead inevitably to a static presentation of Aboriginal social life. It is as though everything was pre-ordained, a blueprint set down for all eternity. When the blue-print is tossed to one side by an alien force the society crumbles. Thus the prevailing notion applied to Aboriginal social change is "social disintegration"....

McConnel and Thomson followed Radcliffe-Brown, who is the man most responsible for developing the procedure, in applying it to the Archer River and other parts of the Wik region. This vitiates the value of much of their work. They virtually ignore the fact that the 'system' is manipulated by individual actors, that uterine and other links are important alternatives to agnatic ties, that conflict and sorcery and intrigue are part of daily life, and that men seek power.

People of the Wik region are apt to talk about people and land, one in terms of the other. They posit a necessary link between the two: "I am my land; my land is me". Thus, the Radcliffe-Brownian procedure is well geared to recording statements of ideology; and it is probably for this reason that the procedure has endured so long, and why Radcliffe-Brown himself saw no necessity to change his view of Aboriginal social organization in any substantial way from his earliest writing till his death. Moreover, it led McConnel into promulgating the Wik-Mungkana as an 'ideal type'. At a second glance, however, the ideology is seen to produce only illusory shadows on the ground. There, reality takes quite a different guise.

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Appendix A

Languages and "Tribes" of the Wik Region.

The Wik tribes, as they are commonly known, are located in western Cape York Peninsula, north Queensland. The first reference to the Wik tribes is found in McConnel (1930: 97):

> The Wik-Munkan is the largest and most important of a group of tribes, characterized by names formed with the word *Wik*, signifying "speech", which occupy a stretch of country along the Gulf of Carpentaria, thirty to fifty miles wide, through which flow the Watson, Archer, Kendall, Holroyd and Edward Rivers.

In a later publication McConnel (1939) treats each so-called tribe in some detail. In preparing the following survey I have drawn heavily on her data and have maintained her basically north-south ordering. However, I have included other references in the primary literature and have called on more recent research conducted in the area to clear up ambiguities or to make corrections. I list McConnel's term first; the term in brackets represents my own orthography. Thereafter, except when quoting directly from published sources, I shall retain my version.

1. *Wik-ampama* (Wik-Ompom): McConnel (1939: 58) refers to the Wik-Ompom as the "northernmost of the Wik tribes". She locates them on the upper Watson River and on Piccaninny Creek, which is a northern tributary of the Archer River. She reports that they are bordered to the north by the Mbeiwum (McConnel 1939: 55; Hale's Mbiywom; mbiy - camp (Hale 1966: 166)) to the west by the *Andyiŋit* (McConnel 1939: 62. It should be noted that on her map in the same article (p. 55) McConnel locates the Leningiti (elsewhere (p. 62) in the same article transcribed as the *Leini-ŋiti*) as the western neighbours. However, my own research in the region suggests that she has located the latter incorrectly. There is a case to

be made that the Leningiti (Hale's Linngithig (Linŋiţiǰ) (1966: 176)) did border the Wik-Ompom in the north-west. The Andyiŋit (Anyjinngith) undoubtedly bordered the Wik-Ompom in the south-west); to the south by the Wik-Mungkana; and to the east by the *Kandyu* (Kaanychu).

McConnel (1939: 58) notes that the Wik-Ompom "were practically exterminated by a punitive expedition, which swept down through their country to the Gulf of Carpentaria to avenge the murder of a white man on one of the stations in the early days of settlement on the Peninsula." (The white man to whom she alludes was probably Edwin, one of the Watson brothers who established Merluna Station on the Upper Watson River in 1888 (See Jack 1921: 346, 676).) She also comments (1930: 98) that the remainding Wik-Ompom "have forgotten their traditions, but I gathered that they resembled the other Wik tribes in the main essentials".

Other references: Probably equivalent to (or including) Sharp's Kok Iala (see Sharp 1939: 256-7, 268-9; 1943: 67). There is a useful reference in Jack (1921: 653). Writing about the Watson River he comments: "The south side receives GUMBOL CREEK (= Bloodwood in the native language), MERKUNGA CREEK (gum tree) and KOKIALAH CREEK (Kokialah being the designation of the local tribe of natives)". McConnel (1930: 98) refers to the Kokiala which she treats separately from the Wik-Ompom. However, she ignores the term in her later and more authoritative survey (1939).

2. *Wikmunkan* (Wik-Mungkana): McConnel (1939: 62) refers to the Wik-Mungkana as an inland group, "who are settled along the Archer, Kendall-Holroyd and Edward (north side) Rivers, and the intervening country..." Bordered to the north by the Wik-Ompom; to the east by the *Kandyu*, in the area of Rokeby cattle station (1930: 58). McConnel (1930: 98) also notes: "At one time Aiyaboto, Kanju and Munkan used to meet at the junction of the Pretender and

Holroyd." Along the coast (and thus constituting the western neighbours of the Wik-Mungkana) McConnel (1939: 62-63) lists the *Wika-pa.tya*, the *Wikatinda*, the *Wiknatara*, the *Wikep.a*, the *Wik mei'an* and the *Wiknatanya*. Recent information indicates that there are speakers of Wik-Mungkana whose territories lie right on the coast, particularly south of the Kirke River.

Her southern boundary is even more problematic. On the one hand, she extends their territory south to the Edward River; on the other, she often refers to groups along the Kendall-Holroyd Rivers as *Wik-ianyi* (For example, see McConnel 1939: 58; and also the discussion under *Wik-ianyi*). I follow McConnel's occasional practice, and Thomson's more habitual practice of using the term Wik-Mungkana to refer to groups only north of the Kendall River (see Thomson 1972: map, facing p. viii; on this map Thomson marks the Kendall River as the "Southern boundary of Wik Monkan. A big territory of the interior"). This coincides with current practice at Aurukun.

It is likely that Wik-Mungkana, even in this geographically more restricted sense, contains some dialectal variation. Thomson (1936: 389) reports that the Ornyau'wa clan, centred on "Ark Orny'auwa on the south side of Archer River.... showed a few dialectical (sic) peculiarities. For this reason it was sometimes spoken of as if it were a separate language, Wik Ornya".

Other references:

McConnel (1930: 98) notes that the Wik-Mungkana had taken over the territory of the Wika-Patja (see *Wika pa.tya* below) who were "now extinct", and that of a group (language unspecified) on the Tokali River (see *Wikatinda* below).

Thomson (1946: 158) describes the Wik-Mungkana in the

following terms:

> The Wik Monkan Tribe occupies a large territory centred on the Archer River on the Western side of Cape York Peninsula, extending from the headwaters of this stream to the estuary. To the North of Archer Bay, in the vicinity of Pera Head, and the Western shoreline of Albatross Bay, the country is occupied by a large number of small tribes grouped by the Wik Monkan under the collective name of "Wik Waiya," (*wik*, talk, speech, *waiya*, bad, because of the difficulty of their languages); to the East lies the once powerful Kandju; to the south-east, such tribes as the Olkolo and Koko Ai'ebadu, and in the South the Wik Tinda, Wik Alkan, Wik natara and allied people.

3. *Wika-pa.tya* (Wik-Paacha): McConnel (1939: 62) writes: "... the *Wika-pa.tya*, known as 'the mangrove people' ... occupied the mangrove-clad islands and southern banks of the wide-mouthed Archer River..." Writing in 1939, she notes that the Wik-Paacha had become "extinct two generations ago." (See also McConnel 1930: 98; she notes that their territory had been taken over by Wik-Mungkana. However, she lists this territory elsewhere as that of the *Wikatinda*; see below, 4). It is worth noting that current knowledge is very scanty about the linguistic status of groups with territorial claims to the southern shores of the Archer River estuary. The term Ay.ngench is often used to describe the language spoken at one time in this region. It is possible that this term is equivalent to McConnel's *Andyiŋit* whose territory, she states, "included also Wallaby Island in the mouth of the Archer River" (1939: 62). It may be equivalent to either Wik-Paacha or Wik-Thinta (See *Wikatinda*, 4), or both.

4. *Wikatinda* (Wik-Thinta): McConnel (1939: 63) writes: "... the Wikatinda (also extinct) ... inhabited the coastal strip from the mouth of the Archer at *Ya.nuŋ* to the Tokali River, eight miles to the south..." *Ya.nuŋ* (Yaan.ŋ) is at the southern mouth of the Archer River. The Tokali River is now known as the Love River

(see also McConnel 1930: 98, where she attributes the territory delineated above to the Wik-Paacha.)

5. *Wiknätara* (Wik-Ngathara): McConnel (1939: 63) locates Wik-Ngathara immediately south of Wik-Thinta, extending to the "*Yo'inka* Inlet and Cape Keerweer." McConnel's yo'inka (Ng.yu'ungk) is the Kirke River which flows into the Gulf of Carpentaria near Cape Keerweer.

In an earlier publication (1930: 97-98) McConnel notes that "... the Wik-Natara or Wik-Kalkan occupy the coast for sixty or seventy miles south of the Archer River, concentrating chiefly on two inland areas of the sea called Yoinka and Arimanka". Arimanka (eeR-mangk) is referred to on current maps as Knox Creek (Aboriginal English: "Knock River"). My research confirms that Wik-Ngathara and Wik-Alkanha (McConnel's Wik-Kalkan) are the same dialect/language (also pers. comm. P. Sutton).

6a. *Wikep.a* (Wik-Epa): McConnel (1939: 63) locates the Wik-Epa inland from the Wik-Ngathara. She refers to them as the "bush-rat people", and notes that they are extinct. This name suggests that she may be referring in fact to members of a particular local group which had become extinct. I can confirm that there are still several Wik-Epa speakers, despite a number of deaths in recent years. Presumably they belong to a different local group.

Further references and notes:

Wik-Eppa, on the upper Yoinka River (Kirke River); "only two men remain" (McConnel 1930: 98). Wik-Iit is given as variant form by P. Sutton (pers. comm.): Sutton also indicates that it is difficult to separate (if at all) Wik-Epa from Wik-Me'anha (see below). Hale lists them as alternative forms in field notes. A possible explanation, offered by Sutton (pers. comm.) is that the

dialects spoken by several neighbouring local groups operate on a cline, with Wik-Epa at one end, and Wik-Me'anha at the other. In between lie one or more intermediate forms (e.g., ½ Epa/½ Me'anha).

6b. *Wikmei'an* (Wik Me'anha): McConnel (1939: 63) also locates Wik Me'anha inland from Wik-Ngathara (i.e., north of the Kirke River mouth). However, my own research indicates clearly that this language/dialect was spoken inland of the area occupied, according to McConnel, by the *Wik-natanya* (i.e., south of the Kirke River mouth) (see 7, below). She also notes that, at the time of writing, speakers of this language/dialect numbered "only a few clans". She continues: "They are distinguished by the *Wikmunkan* as people who speak *mei'anbaka*, but otherwise appear to be culturally one with their *Wik* neighbours, with whom they regularly intermarry - as do all the *Wik* tribes."

Other references:

McConnel refers to the Wik-Mean, which she locates more correctly on the "upper Arimanka" (i.e., Knox Creek) (McConnel 1930: 98).

Also, see comments on *Wikep.a*, 6.

7. *Wik natanya* (Wik-Ngathana): McConnel (1939: 63) locates Wik-Ngathana south of Cape Keerweer, extending to the Kendall River. Although she does not state it specifically, it is clear from the context, and from her map (1939: 55), that Wik-Ngathana is a coastal language/dialect. This is confirmed in an earlier publication (McConnel 1930: 98). She writes: "... the Wik-Natanya or bush-rat people inhabit the corner of the coast between Arimanka and the Kendall - a distance of ten miles." Details of the distribution of this language/dialect are currently being reviewed by Sutton (pers. comm.).

8. *Wiknantyara* (Wik- or Kugu-Nganychara): McConnel (1939: 63) locates the Wik-Nganychara on the coast south of the Kendall River (see also McConnel 1930: 98. She writes: "... the Wik-Nantjara occupy the coastal country between the Kendall-Holroyd and the Edward."). She notes that Sharp refers to a group called the *Ngantya* (see, for example, Sharp 1939: 257, 268), and states that she understands that they constitute a branch of the Wik-Nganychara. A more likely explanation is that a Wik-Nganychara-speaker identified his group as nganycha (1st person plural (exclusive) nominative pronoun); this term serves to distinguish the Wik-Nganychara group of dialects from surrounding languages. For example, in distinguishing themselves from their inland neighbours who speak Wik-Iiyanh (see 10, *Wik-ianyi*), Wik-Nganychara- speakers note that, instead of nganycha, the Wik-Iiyanh use ngana.

For a detailed discussion of the status of the label Wik-Nganychara and the dialects grouped under it, see Chapter 7.

9. *Wik-ianyi* (Wik-Iiyanh): McConnel (1939: 63) writes: 'The *Wikmunkan* on the Kendall-Holroyd and Edward Rivers are known to the northern *Wikmunkan* on the Archer River as the *Wik-ianyi,* or "people who say *iyani* instead of *iyana*", who "speak faster" and have a somewhat different vocabulary. She notes that: "The *Wikianyi* come into contact on the south-east with the *Bakanu* (Sharp: *Aiabakan*) and the *Aiyabɔto* (Sharp: *Aiabadu*) of the upper Holroyd, Edward and Coleman Rivers, to whom they are known as *Munkanu*. She also records (1939: 58) that "The *Kandyu* met ..... the *Wik-ianyi* of the Kendall-Holroyd Rivers on Pretender Creek...."

Also, see *Wiknantyara*, 8; for other details on the distribution

of Wik-Iiyanh, see Chapter 7.

I have chosen not to incorporate the relevant sections of Tindale's survey (1974: 181, 188-9) in this review for, while it adds nothing useful to earlier accounts given for the region, it maintains (and confirms) an error in McConnel's data (viz., the misrendering of Wik-Alkanha as Wik-Kalkan) and introduces a number of new confusions (false or misleading terms, notably Mimungkum and Minungkum (sic); a false etymology, viz., "... muŋkan - hill or mountain"; and a wrong location, by including Wikmumin (Kugu-Muminh) among the (non-existent, at least as a linguistic entity) Mimungkum (= may mangk.m, an epithet applied to people in the 'Ti-Tree' region), or, even worse, Wik-Ompom (his Wikampama)).

Appendix B

Local groups, puul waya and awa on the Archer River: the "Bonefish clan".

This appendix was originally intended to provide a summary of data available in the literature for the Archer River region on the number and nature of estates, their location, linguistic affiliation, 'totems', dog and personal names and 'increase centres'. It was to parallel Appendix C which deals with the Kugu-Nganychara region. McConnel herself provides a summary entitled List of Local Groups and Totems of the Wik-Munkan (1930: 204-5). It was my plan to fill out this list with data drawn from all other sources in the literature. However, the task did not finally prove worthwhile. Firstly, there is very little information available for many of the groups, especially as one moves further away from Aurukun up the river. Secondly, I would have been called on to incorporate my own research data from the area, for in some places it conflicts with McConnel's. To give one example, her local group X1a is listed as having two 'totems', *min kora* - native companion, and *mai po'alam* - yellow fruit. Each is said to possess a 'totem centre'. On the map (p. 191) contained in the same article these sites are indicated by circles (which are meant to show that she herself has visited the awa). The circle indicating the brolga awa is located at a point roughly mid-way between the eastern extremity of the Archer River estuary and the junction of Running Creek with the main river. Wik-Mungkana can be thought of as distributed roughly between these two points.

McConnel does not give the linguistic affiliations of any of the local groups. It is to be assumed from her account that

for the local groups 1 - X1b which lie along the Archer River the prevailing language is Wik-Mungkana. However, members of group X1a ("Brolga") who still live at Aurukun claim that their real language should be Wik-Paacha (although they now speak Wik-Mungkana). They claim that their estate lies on the lower river, in the vicinity of Bamboo Station (i.e., it lies within the coastal division and is, on this account, consistent with the affiliation with Wik-Paacha). Their puul waya is minha kor'a, brolga (Grus rubicundus); however, there is no awa within their estate, and its present members are unaware of a brolga "story-place" anywhere on the Archer River. On the other hand, they are well aware of the brolga "story" on "Christmas Creek". They do not themselves possess any brolga dance. McConnel claims that there were 20-30 members of this group alive in 1929, many more than in any of the other groups. Yet the data available on them are extremely scanty. The information which is available, on the basis of my own work, is remarkably consistent with the type of picture which may be obtained from the coastal division of the Kugu-Nganychara region.

McConnel made an extensive collection of myths. Out of the 51 recorded in Myths of the Munkan, 31 (with one or two dubious cases) relate to the Archer River.

In this Appendix I have concentrated on a single local group, McConnel's local group II (my AR2). The format followed is the same as that employed in Appendix C where the relevant categories and abbreviations are explained. The information available for this group is much more detailed than for any of the others. It provides the major reference point in her writings.

ZONE A : Archer River

1. Code: AR2 ("Bonefish")

2. Linked groups: -----

3. Location: Lower Archer River, within the triangular piece of country east of the junction of the Archer River and Watson River.

4. Language: Wik-Mungkana.

5. Puul waya:

(1) mai korpi - black mangrove (Mu. mayi yuku); mai kurp - Brugiera Rheedii (Th. 1946: 163) (Var. mai kɔrpa (McC. 1936: 458), mai ko:ṛpi (McC. 1957: 6).

McConnel (1936: 458) stresses its edibility and its "economic" character.

Story: The Bony Bream and his sister, the Mangrove Woman. (McConnel 1935: 67,72-6; 1936: 458 (brief ref.); 1957: 39-41).

(2) min wolkollan - bone-fish (Mu. nga'a wali kal.n); probably Giant Herring, Elops australis. Grant (1978: 86) notes that "the flesh ... carries ... an abundance of small fine bones..." Var. wällkäll'n (Th. 1946: 159,60,1).

McConnel (1930: 101) places great stress on the seasonal availability of the "bonefish":

> During the bone-fish season large numbers of people gather in the lower reaches of the Archer River to spear the bone-fish from canoes on dark nights by the light of tea-tree bark torches. A

> torch in one hand and a spear in the other, the fisherman stands in the prow and spears the bone-fish as it darts in front of the canoe dazzled by the flare of the torch.

Thomson (1946: 161) writes in similar vein:

> The Bonefish is an important food fish in Wik Monkan economy. Its movements are seasonal, and much ritual surrounds the capture and cutting up of the big Bonefish which gives its name to *Wăllkăll'n Korp'n* i.e. "Bonefish clan ... The Wăllkăll'n people believe that the method of capturing these fish, and the ritual which accompanies it, was established after a process of trial and error, by the clan ancestors, *păm mul ut*. Accordingly, these methods have become traditional, and the people adhere closely to the orthodox methods and the accompanying ritual, in the belief that it is a recapitulation of the actions of the first *Wăllkăll'n* clan ancestors, and that any departure from it may bring "bad luck" on the enterprise...

Thomson (1946: 161) further notes that the "bonefish" is killed

> ... by striking it across the back of the head, at the base of the skull, with a heavy rod of ironwood, a short club, *yuk ol*,... sometimes carried in the mouth when the people are fishing ...

As opposed to McConnel, Thomson remarks that the torches used for night fishing are made of "stringy bark" (Eucalyptus tetrodonta). Neither McConnel nor Thomson specify the season during which it is abundant.

McConnel (1936: 459) notes that the "bonefish" is "the boss" or the leading *pulwaiya* of the clan. In these circumstances it is difficult to know why she listed it only second to mai korpi.

Stories: See (1) mai korpi.

(3) neanya - fly (Mu. yuku nheena). Var. nei'anya (McC. 1936: 458)

Story: The Frog and the Fly (McConnel 1936: 459 (brief ref.); 1957: 42-3).

(4) min tatta - frog (Mu. yuku thata) Var. min tata (McC. 1936: 458). McConnel (1936: 458) stresses its "economic" character, and refers to it specifically as "the edible frog". My own information suggests that the term, minha thata, is a generic term applied to all frogs.

Story: See (3) neanya.

(5) moiya - bullroarer (Mu. yuku muuyu). In a later publication, McConnel (1936: 458) refers to it as the "symbol of puberty" and links it with "Wantya-kɔman or young-girl-at-puberty" (See (7), below).

Story: Moiya and Pakapaka (McConnel 1935: 71,76-83; 1957: 119-124).

The next two pulwaiya were not listed in McConnel's initial account (1930):

(6) iyebana - peewit (McC. 1936: 458) (Mu. minha thuchi yagwi), Magpie lark, Grallina cyanoleuca.

McConnel (1936: 458) notes that it is subject to a "less specialized cult."

Story: The Peewit and the Willy Wagtail (McConnel 1936: 458-9 (brief ref.); 1957: 74).

(7) wantya-kɔman - "young-girl-at-puberty" (McC. 1936: 458) (See (5) above).

Story: See (5) moiya.

6. Dog names: yatut - "The word *ya* is applied to the characteristic long forked bones of the bonefish: other bones, however, are *kăntj*; *tutta* is to pull out, hence *yatut*, extracting the bones of *min wăllkăll'n* the totemic fish" (Th. 1946: 162).

7. Personal names:

In a general comment McConnel (1936: 459) states: "Members of the clan take their name from the bonefish (as also from the mangrove and peewit)..." Elsewhere she writes:

> It is because the women prepare the seeds of the mangrove for food that they take their names from the mangrove. The men are called after the bonefish because it is they who hunt and spear the fish (1935: 76).

This comment does not withstand close scrutiny, for women's names do in fact appear to derive from "bonefish" as well as from mangrove (see tippunt/tipwanta, below).

♂ bambegan (from pw 2). var. bambeigan (McC 1935: 68,74,75); bāmbeigan (1935: 73); bā̆mbé:gan (1957: 32,39,74); pā̆mpikā̆n (Thomson 1946: 161); etc.

Some controversy surrounds the meaning of this name. McConnel writes (1930: 193):

> The personal name (bam = man, began = beats) refers to the belief that the heart of the bone-fish beats excitedly when it sees a man coming. As we passed by in a canoe I was asked if I heard the heart of the bone-fish beating. (See also 1935: 73,74).

Thomson indicates that the name is the 'hereditary "big name" of the men of *Wå̆llkå̆ll'n Korp'n*, i.e., the "Bonefish clan". He goes on to say that the name

> ... refers simply to the killing of the big *Wå̆llkå̆ll'n* fish by striking it across the back of the skull, with a heavy rod of ironwood ... (1946: 162)

Thomson consciously argues against McConnel and states that '... there is no reason to believe that the name means more than "the man hits" ... (p. 162)'

A possible alternative explanation is that it relates to the activities of men at the awa (see below).

♂ yäänk omp'n (from pw 2). Thomson (1946: 161) translates the name as "leg cuts". He says that it refers "to the traditional practice of cutting off the tail of the Bonefish at the point where the body tapers, this constriction being called *yäänk* (leg)..." (see also 1946: 162). McConnel gives the name as Yáŋkambin derived from *yaŋka* = tail, *ampan* = cuts! She translates it as "the tail is cut off first" (1957: 40).

Both agree that it is a male name. Thomson gives its status in one place as "small name" (1946: 161) but in another place he gives the name yaŋkumpan as merely a nickname for a member of the "Bonefish clan" (1972: 19).

o
+ päämkottjätta (NP (Thomson 1946: 161-3).

McConnel (1957: 74) gives the same name in the form päämkɔtyiţa, derived from peewit (pw 6). It comprises two elements: "*pama* = man, *katya* = afar off". She translates it as "the peewit sees a man at a distance".

o
+ kontutthan (from pw 1). McConnel (1935: 75-6) gives the meaning as '..."in-the-head-the-spear-sticks" (*konta* = head, *tútthan* = sticks into). The stalk of the mangrove beam sticks into the red sepals which resemble hair' (Also, McConnel 1935: 73-4; 1957: 40).

o
+ tippunt (from pw 1). Thomson indicates that this is usually a "small name" (NM) (p. 161). He says that the name derives from the "belly" of the "bonefish": "... the ventral or abdominal wall, the *pièce-de-résistance* of the Bonefish, which carries much fat and is cooked by itself" (1946: 162).

McConnel (1957: 40), in direct contradiction, says that the name means "the entrails are not eaten". She gives

the name in the form tipwánta (... "*tipi* = guts, *wanta* = discard"...).

8. Awa:

(1) mai korpi - mangrove; see pw 1.

McConnel (1930: 189) notes that the awa is aptly located in environmental terms:

> In the lower reaches of the Archer River, the banks of which are lined with mangrove, is the *auwa* of the black mangrove *(mai korpi)*, the seeds of which are eaten after special preparation (See also 1957: 6).

She indicates that the awa was established after the "Mangrove woman" had a fight with "Bonefish" (1935: 458). However, its exact location is in some doubt, for in another reference (1935: 72-5) she places it at Potyamamanam on the Watson River, rather than on the Archer River.

She specifies that an "increase ceremony" is performed at the awa.

See references to stories under pw 1.

(2) min wolkollan - bone-fish; see pw 2.

McConnel (1930: 193) locates and describes the awa, gives details of the "increase ceremony", the way in which it takes effect, and its purpose:

> The *auwa* of the bonefish *(min wolkollan)* is on a little creek, Adeda, running into the deep waters of the lower Archer where in the bone-fish season people came from far and wide to spear them from canoes at night by the light of torches. At Adeda are mysterious looking holes in the bank in which the bone-fish possibly breeds. Men of the bone-fish clan paint their chests with white clay, to represent the fish, hitting the trees and stamping the ground round the holes to make the *pulwaiya* angry, and attentive to their demand that the bone-fish should "come up plenty" in the following year. (See also 1935: 67; 1936: 458,459-60; 1937: 362; and 1957: xviii).

See references to stories under pw 1.

(3) neanya - fly; var. nyeana (1930: 196); see pw 3.

McConnel writes (1930: 196): "... the fly totem (nyeana) may be increased at its auwa for the discomfort of strangers." (See also 1936: 459.)

See references to stories under pw 3.

(4) min tatta - frog; see pw 4.

McConnel (1936: 458) indicates that the awa is "economic in function"; and that an "increase" ceremony is performed at the site. No other details.

See references to stories under pw 3.

(5) moiya - bullroarer; see pw 5.

McConnel (1930: 200) notes that the awa is at a place called Kulepan, on the Watson River. (See also 1957: 119-124, where the site is referred to as Kălabin; she indicates that the bullroarer was placed in a bloodwood tree; the two girls (pw 7) went down into the water. There is no indication that any awa as such is created; or that any rituals are performed at the site.)

(6) iyebana - peewit; see pw 6.

In the story of "The Peewit and the Willy Wagtail", the peewit "goes down" at Tɔmpätin (McConnel 1957: 74). There is no indication that there is any "increase" ceremony associated with this site.

(7) wantya-kɔman - "young-girl-at-puberty"; see pw 7.

McConnel (1935: 459) records that a rock marks the spot near which the wantya-kɔman, "a matured girl", hid the first bullroarer. In a later reference (1957: 119-124) there are in fact two young women involved. A rock in the river marks where they "went down". (See also McConnel

1936: 462,87).

There is no indication that any "increase" ceremony occurs at this site.

See reference to stories under pw 5.

Notes: McConnel also provides information about ritual performances associated with puul waya of this group. With respect to "bonefish" (pw 2), see McConnel 1935: 67, Plate 1, and caption p. 92; 1936: 460; 1937: 361. Also, though she associates the designs and the performance with an increase ritual, the photograph (1930: plate V, facing p. 192) captioned "Men of the bonefish totem painted for an increase rite, one holding a paddle and the other a torch..." almost certainly relates to a well-known winychinama dance owned by this group.

One comment by McConnel (1936: 84) is worth noting. She writes:

> In the ritual of the bonefish *pulwaiya* in the Wikmunkan tribe, the hero wears a bunch of peewit feathers on his head. The peewit is a less important but associated totem belonging to the same clan as the bonefish. This is an example of composite totemism and does not signify the importance of the peewit totem.

With respect to moiya (pw 5), McConnel gives brief descriptions of rituals which form part of the uchanama ceremony (1935: 68-9). See also McConnel 1935: plate II, and captions pp. 92-3.

Appendix C

A checklist of estates, kam waya and awu in the Kugu-Nganychara region.

This appendix lists available data for all estates identified from the Kugu-Nganychara region. A number of these estates no longer have any living members; nevertheless, they continue to wield some influence, sometimes powerful, in daily affairs.

The region is divided up into a number of zones on the basis of riverine systems; and the division between coast and inland: Zone K - Kendall River (further divided into north of the river, i.e., sub-zone KN, and south of the river, i.e., sub-zone KS; in addition, the sub-zone KU refers to the inland and opposed to the coastal division); Zone T - "Thuuk River" (T - coastal division; TU - inland division); Zone H - "Holroyd River" (H - coastal division; HU - inland division); Zone X - "Christmas Creek" (X - coastal division; XU - inland division); and Zone B - "Breakfast Creek" (B - coastal division; BU - inland division). Strictly speaking, the sub-zone KN falls outside the KNg region as defined in Chapter 7. However, the populations of KN and KS are linked in many ways (e.g., through marriage, ceremonial life) and I adjudged it useful to include information on both.

The information is provided in the following format:
Item 1: A code abbreviation consisting of sub-zonal location, and a number differentiating each estate from other estates within the same sub-zone. Next, I list the usual standard totemico-linguistic label given to the estate corporation followed by an English gloss, e.g., kugu-yome ("Possum").

Item 2 - Linked group(s) - lists other estates which are deemed to be linked on a 'totemic basis', i.e., they share one or more kam waya in common, and are referred to often by the same totemico-linguistic label. Most if not all the links included in this compilation are readily acknowledged and occur continually in everyday discourse.

Item 3 (labelled Location) locates the estate in broad terms. In many cases the principal camp-site is specified; these sites are indicated by the abbreviation NP meaning "big name" attached to the names of these sites. Also, the names of other sites are listed in order to help locate the estate. In the case of one estate, viz., X5, I have decided to provide a list of all names given by its senior member. This estate figures prominently in the body of discussion in Part II.

In that list, the following additional abbreviations are used:

K - sites specified as agu kunyji, "full country".

C - "company place"

FC - "company place" when specified as being "full company" (Mu. agu thaha-thonon; Uw. agu thaha-kuntim)

A - awu, or "story place"; note that if it is a "company story", the site itself will be classified 'C'.

Po - "poison country", agu panych; agu mukam, "free country", will be clearly indicated by the lack of special classification.

B - "bora" or ceremonial centre.

AK - agu koyanyje - birth-place

AKi - birth-place of an "insider"

AKo - birth-place of an "outsider"

W - well

p - permanent water

P - agu pambe, lagoon or swamp

R - "dinner camp"; there is no need to mark camping places specifically.

It was not thought expedient to reproduce here lists of all sites recorded for each estate, even if this were possible. The data contain considerable overlapping, not only because of "company" relationships, but also because there are conflicting claims, of varying degrees of merit, to many of the same sites. These claims particularly affect sites which fall in estates of which the membership is now defunct.

Item 4 (Language): The linguistic affiliation is listed for each estate. The guiding principle has been self-identification, although there is a high level of agreement among all people about the linguistic affiliation of particular estates at this level.

Item 5 (Kam waya): The known kam waya for each estate are listed. For the coastal estates and some of the inland estates (e.g., HU1, KU9) the lists are based on kam waya identified by a member or members of the estate involved. This means that the terms given are normally in the language of the estate. Each kam waya is assigned a number to ease cross-referencing with dog names, personal names, and awu where relevant.

Item 6 (Dog names): Dog names are listed where available. Information is usually given as to the sex of the dog to which the name may refer, the meaning of the name, and the kam waya from which it derives (indicated by the abbreviation kw followed by the number assigned to the relevant kam waya).

Item 7 (Personal names): Personal names are given generally with details of sex, status, i.e., whether they are "big names" (NP) or "small names" (NM), meaning, and the kam waya from which they are derived (cf. item 6).

Item 8 (Awu): Under this item, awu located within each estate are listed. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, merely to serve as a guide to whether phenomena which serve as kam waya are also represented by an awu within the estate. If so, the link is indicated following the procedure adopted in the case of items 6 and 7. Sometimes important awu not linked with kam waya are listed.

In some cases notes are appended at the end of these items. Generally they indicate that the estate in question is defunct.

Information for the upper Kendall River is thin. Very few people remain from this area (with the exception of estates KU9 and KU10); many that do generally reside in Coen. It is likely that more detailed information will only come about through a proper mapping programme. As indicated in Chapter 9 this has not yet been possible.

ZONE K : Kendall River

1. Code: KN1; kugu-kalu ("Rat") (var. kugu-chiichi).

2. Linked group(s): KS2,4.

3. Location: At the mouth of the Kendall River, on the north bank.

   Sites: nguyunga
   kuchund-eypanh
   kumbanhin
   ambang

4. Language: Wik-Ngathana.

5. Kam waya (Ng. ngatha kooenhiya:

   (1) rat

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu (Ng. eemoetha):

   minha thukan - Cape York scrub fowl; awu located at ambang, in a patch of scrub.

   minha kuuku - Cape York brush turkey; awu linked with that of minha thukan, see above.

   madhe-awu - Australian pelican (Mu. minha madhe); located at agu muthan kumbanhin

1. Code: KN2; "Spearhandle" (kugu-keka).

2. Linked group(s): H4; KN3.

3. Location: Located on the coast north of Kendall River.

4. Language: Wik-keey.ngan

5. Kam waya:
   (1) "spear"
   (2) "spearhandle" (okonye)
   (3) "freshwater sharkfish" (Uw. nga'a kujin, Mum. minh kuchin)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: KN3

2. Linked group(s): KN2, H4.

3. Location: On the lower Kendall River, north bank, upstream from KN1.
   Sites: punyelang (NP) - "main camp centre".
   thuyunh (NM) - "outstation", i.e., secondary site.
   thaa'-pundi
   pu'anhdha (C)

4. Language: Wik-Ngathana.

5. Kam waya: -----

6. Dog names: -- ---

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu (Ng. eemoetha):

wiikath-aw/wiikath-eemoeth - "fairy story"; located at thaa'-pundi.

1. Code: KN4; kugu-wangga ("Dilly bag").

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: North of Kendall River; ya'ing "big scrub, straight down (E) from Dish Yard, near branch of Knock River." wet.n - Dish Yard.

4. Language: Wik-Iinychanya (var. Wik-Ngathana).

5. Kam waya:

(1) wangga - "dilly bag"

(2) katanyak (Nn), pintili (Uw, Mum) - "bonefish"

(3) nga'a pinya (Uw), minh pinyi (Mum) - "nailfish"

(4) "jewfish"

(5) "file stingaree"

(6) "spotted stingaree"

(7) "diamond stingaree"

(8) "big silver mullet"

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

o/+ mayi manu (kw 1).

8. Awu: -----

Notes: Now defunct.

1. Code: KN5; wik-upun ("milk-wood"); var. kugu-minha ("Diver"/"Goose").

2. Linked group(s): X2; H6,9.

3. Location: North of the Kendall River; described as "round Dish Yard; Knock River top-side".

4. Language: Wik-Me'enh.

5. Kam waya (Me. puul way; ngatha puul - my FF; kaha-puul - 'resembles FF' (kaha-face, puul - FF)).

(1) yuk upun - "poison milk-tree" (Excoecaria agallocha).

(2) yuk nguchaman - "turpentine" (Canamium australianum).

(3) minha koona - "mangrove duck", Burdekin duck (Tadorna radjah).

(4) minh ko'ina - Magpie goose (Anseranas semipalmata).

(5) minh arinyja - "iron duck", Black duck (Anas s. superciliosa).

(6) minh mayanh - "diver duck".

(7) minh warka - "smelly swamp turtle".

(8) ingk pikiya/kek uyak - "porcupine" (Tachyglossus sp.)

(9) minha panhthiyan (Uw) - "diver duck" (Anhinga melanogaster).

(10) waka winychin (UW) - "sugarcane grass" (associated with geese) (kw 4).

(11) kunyche-mut-ongk - "yellow storm bird, swearing bird", i.e., yellow oriole, Oriolus sagitattus.

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

♂ ku'a nhat (nhat - "seed of sugarcane grass", kw 10)

♂ thanhthidha (NP) (kw 1) - refers to poisonous qualities of plant.

o
+ minh manu (NP) - "goose neck" (kw 4).

o
+ wunt (k)enhthanh (NM) (wunt - wings beating, kenhth - vb. frighten) - "when someone frighten geese and flapping of wings when they get up - buk, buk, buk" (kw 4).

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: KS1; kugu-pangku ("Wallaby").

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: The south side of the Kendall River mouth.

Sites: puntum

ngaka kaychim

mukum-awu

4. Language: Kugu-ugbanh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha pangku - Agile wallaby (Macropus agilis).

(2) minha yangki - Amethyst python (Python amethystinus).

(3) minha wudhu/pupan - small unidentified wallaby, apparently extinct (possibly Protemnodon bicolor).

(4) yuku thokele - unidentified swamp plant; red flower.

(5) minha madhe - Australian pelican.

6. Dog names:

ku'a thokele (kw 4).

ku'a wudhu (kw 3).

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

nga'a thatpala-awu (Mu. nga'a thatpala - large mullet sp.) - located at kuli-aynychan.

yomen-awu (yomen - yamstick) - created when a man and woman drowned when swimming across the Kendall River.

Notes: Now defunct; estate now transferred to KS5.

1. Code: KS2; Kugu-ngutu ("Bushfire")

2. Linked group(s): KN1; KS4.

3. Location: Kendall River on the south bank.

Sites: kengge

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh.

5. Kam waya (Mum. kem waya):

(1) minha thupan, minha anycha (thu)pan - "salmon".

(2) pungku - "knee-cap" (given as translation; more usually it refers to any round lump. The "salmon" is well-known for the large nodules which form on the back-bones of mature fish, and which, when roasted in a fire, provide a source of white paint. It is likely that these nodules are the pungku in question.

(3) ngo'onyji, (Mu) ngutu - "grassfire".

(4) minha chiichi, minha kopatha - "bush rat". Chiichi is said to "mock" the call of the "bush rat".

(5) waka kek yuta - grass, the roots of which are eaten by the bush-rat; the latter also nests in the grass.

(6) mayi ku'uwa - "red fruit in scrub" (Eugenia carissoides).

(7) mayi kumba - "black fruit" (Ficus sp.)

(8) minha pawe - catfish; short and fat; divided tail.

(9) minha yiwa - "white owl, eats rats" (probably Barn owl, Tyto alba, and Grass owl, T. longimembris).

(10) kempepan - "black water-snake, yellow belly" (Liasis fuscus)

(11) wubandu - "small carpet snake"; white and black spotted; scrub. (Resembles kempepan; unknown on the Archer River.)

(12) yuku mali - "bats"; live in hollow logs.

(13) ngu'unyji waka - small hawk ("sparrow"); follows bushfires (see kw 3).

(14) minha ngome - "saltwater shark; yellow.'

(15) agu ngunycha/ngacha ngunycha - "wind snake" (timid non-poisonous species).

(16) koch welenggo - "gecko".

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

♂ pungk melya (NP) (kw 1,2).

♂ ngutu waka (NP) (kw 3,13).

8. Awu:

ku'a-awu - "dog story".

1. Code: KS3; Uw. kugu-atu/Mum. kugu-wun-ga ("Sugarbag").

2. Linked group(s): XU1.

3. Location: Situated on the coast south of the Kendall River.

Sites: pi'am

adham

poynyche

mangka pomponi

iiy

kapi-awu

kanggani

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) mayi atu - "sugarbag"

(2) minha thuntu - frilled-necked lizard.

(3) minha wiingu - "little bird"

(4) minha mangan - "little possum"

(5) minha waga - "small possum"

(List provided by DH from H3).

An alternative list was provided by RK from KS5, in Muminh:

(a) mayi wun-ga - "sugarbag".

(b) minha mangan - "morning bird" (Honeyeater sp.)

(c) minha mangan - "squirrel" (sugar glider, Petaurus breviceps).

(d) minha thuchi workom - "blue crane".

(e) minha or ku'a waaga - possibly native cat (Dasyurus sp.)

(f) minha mulinpu - Torres Strait pigeon

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

o+ pinhdha mun-kayi (Mu. mun-kayi - Torres Strait pigeon) (NP)
"head like the pigeon".

o+ mayi kugu ngangka (NM) - "bees making noise inside hive"

o+ mayi mangka (NP) - suggested that it meang honeycomb.

8. Awu:

"mermaid story" - obol-awu (var. ogbol-awu); located at pi'am.

"frog story" - yuku waba-awu; located at pi'am

"goose story" - located at pi'am.

"barramundi story" - located at pi'am.

"leech story" - located at pi'am.

Note: There is some debate as to whether there are not in fact two estates in this region with this set of kam waya. If there is a second estate it is almost certainly located in zone T.

1. Code: KS4; kugu-chiichi ("Bush rat").

2. Linked group(s): KN1; KS2.

3. Location: Located (by a member of the corporation) on the south side of the Kendall River mouth.

   Places nominated: puntum - "right at the mouth"

   ngaka kachim - "coming down (S) beach way".

   (These sites are right at the mouth of the river; they fell in the estate of KS1, now defunct.) The actual estate lies apparently much further to the south.

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minha chiichi ("mocking name"), minha kupatha - "rat".

   (2) minh thupan pi'an - "big curry part in guts; salmon fish".

   (3) waka yutu - grass ("eaten by rats; nest there too, and eat the root").

   (4) ngo'onyji - bushfire

   (5) pungk - knee, kneecap. My informant (JK) thought that it might be "bones in fish", i.e., related to kw 2.

   (6) may ku'uwa - "red fruit".

   (7) may kumbe - "black fruit".

   (8) thuchi ngu'unyji - "little bird like sparrow (hawk?) - always come for bushfire; for grasshopper."

   (9) yiwa - Barn owl (Tyto alba); Grass owl (T. longimembris)

   (10) minha ngome - "saltwater shark - yellow colour; tail like freshwater shark".

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

ngutu waka - grassfire (Mu. ngutu - grassfire); kw 4.

kek yutu - "because rats always eat that grass now"; kw 1,3.

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: KS5; kugu-toho-toh ("Barramundi")

2. Linked group(s): B1 (also possibly H10, though members of this corporation have not referred to it).

3. Location: Kendall River - south bank.

Sites: nga'adha

thuke

umam

milbe

agu thunhtha (inland)

thunhtha pangkam

pangkam

wunyinh-awu

4. Language: Kugu-Uwanh

5. Kam waya:

It is worth comparing two lists given by the same informant about 12 months apart.

List 1: (1) "barramundi, big and little" (2 separate names big: nga'a wunggam; little: nga'a thaku)

(2) "rock cod" (nga'a angk.rat.n)

(3) mud crab (nga'a pooya)

(4) "file stingaree" (manyire)

(5) galah

(6) seagull (miji)

(7) "black bream" (miji)

(8) "red schnapper" (miy-miy)

(9) pheasant coucal (minha pupu) (recalled when observed).

List 2: (a) nga'a wunggam - "barramundi"

(b) nga'a angk.rat.n - "rock cod"

(c) nga'a pooy - mud crab

(d) nga'a miya-miya - "red schnapper"

(e) nga'a tha'u-wunkam - "file stingaree"

(f) nga'a miji - "little black bream"

(g) nga'a molbe - "long grunter" (kw 10)

Additional items:

(11) mayi thunhtha - "white fruit" (Eugenia eucalyptoides)

(12) yuku puchim - mangrove species; used as "floating log" for crossing streams.

(13) nga'a konalinh - "butterfish".

6. Dog names:

♂ ngawi thiin - ripple created by swimming barramundi (kw 1).

♂ wakanh - barramundi chasing little fish (kw 1).

♂ atha pathanh - (path- vb. bite) - "when they go do when biting mullet..." (kw 1).

♂ patananh - (avoidance language) "when barramundi walking on side, going on side (in shallow water)" (kw 1).

♂ yegananh - "pin on barramundi's back; spine on dorsal fin (kw 1).

♂ yee'-mipe (yee - current, running water, mipe - place name).

♂ tananh - "barramundi standing up, still - resting; only tail moving" (kw 1).

♂ miji thuka - uncertain derivation - either from nga'a miji (kw 7), or from a river of the same name.

♂ puchim bedha - "flowers of floating wood" (kw 12).

♂ konalinh - "butterfish" (kw 13).

♀ pooya thuka - "crab eggs" (thuka - egg) (kw 3).

♀ konhtho thuka - "rice" seeds (mayi konhtho - "wild rice").

♀ kalim thuka - (kalim - galah) (kw 5).

7. Personal names:

♂ kaha-yuga (NP) - refers to the "long nose" of the barramundi, pointing up and looking fierce (translated, in Uwanh, as nga'a kaha-kuli - kaha, face; kuli, angry, "cheeky", wild, savage) (kw 1).

♂ nga'a kaha-kuli (NM) - "ferocious looking" (see kaha-yuga, above) (kw 1).

♂ kaha peke thanan (NM) - "barramundi standing upside down in water having a rest" (kw 1).

♂ nga'a punta - "white thing inside barramundi; good to eat - sort of jelly stuff inside. Sometimes throw away; sometimes keep" (RK) (kw 1).

♀ kuw wankin (kuw - west, wank- - vb. turn back) - "barrimundi, when tide recedes barramundi turn back and head west" (kw 1).

♀ pudhi (WM. me'enhdhan) - "bulgru"; "in freshwater time barramundi hide in bulgru" (kw 1).

♀ mayi kunga thuka (thuka - egg, i.e., fruit) - significance of name unknown (kw 11).

o
+ thaha-muwa (NP) - blossoms of mayi thunhtha (thaha - mouth, muwa - old, white, as in white whiskers); "just like white beard" (kw 11).

McConnel also lists a number of names for this corporation (1934: 320-2) (See also McConnel 1930: 186).

8. Awu:

"turtle story" - in swamp at milbe.

"fly story" - in swamp at milbe.

"flying-fox story" (wuki-awu)

wunyinh-awu (wunyinh - unidentified tree sp.) - located near nga'adha.

thepanda-awu - "taipan"; located at nga'adha

minha kor'a-awu - "brolga"; located at nga'adha.

It is said that the spirits of members of this corporation come from these two awu. Both represent "long" species; Kendall River people are noted for being tall.

1. Code: KU1

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Inland division of Kendall, in the region of koka.
Sites: kuthe

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) Flying-fox.

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

ngakwi-awu - "water-snake" (Liasis fuscus).

1. Code: KU2; kugu-wayn-gan ("Curlew") (cf. McConnel XIIIC).

2. Linked group(s): XU2.

3. Location: Inland of Kendall River, on north bank inland from thanmul.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha wayn-gan - "curlew", probably Southern stone curlew.

(2) mayi payan - "water-lily"

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

o
+ yangk thipin (NP) - "from mayi payan, water-lily; string and flower finish" (kw 2).

o
+ yangk waninh (NM) - "from night curlew; when he play about, jump aroun and call out for mate or grass"

o
+ pinhdha kulawi (pinhdha - head, kulawi - curlew) (kw 1).

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: KU3: kugu-aychamp/kugu-nhampi ("Emu") (cf. McConnel's local group XIIIa).

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Middle reaches of the main Kendall River.

   Sites: thaha-pul.n

   achamp-awu

   People referred to as pama pimpa thurban wakana (pimpa - bullrushes), identifying them with a characteristic feature of the river as it flows through this estate. The term thurban refers to the thick tea-tree gallery-forests which line the river, upstream from mamen.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) achamp - emu

6. Dog names:

   ♂ ku'a toom

   ♂ ku'a yija (yija - emu feathers) (kw 1).

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

   achamb-awu - "emu story", located near thaha-pul.n.

("Kam waya, awu, all in one".)

. Code: KU4; kugu-keke (Nankeen Kestrel) (cf. McConnel's local group XIIId).

. Linked group(s): -----

. Location: "Head of Kendall, right on top; on south arm running up from achamb-awu."

. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

. Kam waya:

(1) minha keke - Nankeen kestrel (Falco. c. cenchroides).

(2) minha engka - "jardine" (Scleropages l. leichhardti.)

. Dog names:

♂ ku'a nhampa magan - "minha keke chasing bait", e.g., frogs, etc.

. Personal names: -----

. Awu:

agu tha'u kakalang/kakalang ngan-nga - "hawk story".

. Code: KU5 ("Bandicoot").

. Linked group(s): -----

. Location: Between the Kendall and the "Holroyd" - on the western margin of the inland division.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minh monke - "bandicoot"

   (2) pinya pinya - "little bird, good talker; yellow chest"

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: KU6; kugu-nhompi ("Wedge-tailed eagle") (cf. McConnel's local group XVI).

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Upper Kendall River.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minha nhompi - Wedge-tailed eagle (Aquila a. audax).

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: nhompo-awu - "eagle story". Located near kulan-awu, "possum story" (See KU 8).

1. Code: KU7; "Devil" (mumpa) (cf. McConnel's local groups XVII, XVIII).

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Upper Kendall River; northern branch. Estate situated near mirpa (Merapah Station).
   Site: mumpa-awu.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh (?)

5. Kam waya: -----

6. Dog names: ------

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

   pacha-awu - "shooting-star story"; located near mumpa-awu.

   mumpa-awu - "devil story".

   chepend-awu - quail "story"; located near mumpa-awu.

   wadha-awu - "crow-story".

McConnel (1930: 205) lists, under local group XVIII, an item nantiaka which she translates as "praying mantis". My informants suggest this is really nganychengko which is equivalent to mumpa. The latter is described as being like a person carrying spears and a woomera. He is seen as a powerful sorcerer; and kills strangers on sight.

See also McConnel 1957: 9.

1. Code: KU8; kugu-yome ("Possum") (cf. McConnel's local group XIVa).

2. Linked group(s): See X5, etc.

3. Location: Upper Kendall River, near KU (kugu-keke). KU and KU form "full company". People referred to as pama 'anti wakanh ('anti - name applied to river upstream from thaha-pul.n.).

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minha kulan (WM), minha yome (Mu) - "possum".

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

   ♂ pungk kulan (NP) (kw 1).

   ♂ minha untu (NP) (kw 1) (see X5).

   ♂ agu wuk rampe (NM) ("from beetle"; see X5).

8. Awu:

   "possum story" located near "hawk story" (See KU6).

1. Code: KU9; kugu-kanhe ("Freshwater crocodile") (cf. McConnel's local group XXIV).

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Kendall River, "inside from um po'am, straight up from kok." Described as pama kaninga, "on top people".

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh (sometimes classified as Ay.path).

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha kanhe - "freshwater crocodile" (Crocodylus johnstoni)

(2) yuku thaynych.lu - "milk tree"

(3) yuk wontóje - "cottonseed, yellow flower"

(4) yuk odho - "beefwood/nutwood"

(5) muk - "stone"

(6) minha thuchi thayma - "sparrow"

(7) thugu pool - "something like blue-tongue lizard"

(8) nga'a mankan - "cod" (freshwater).

6. Dog names:

♂ kanhe wudu - "old man crocodile"

♀ thuka kambanh - eggs incubating (thuka - egg, kamb- vb. cook, roast, especially in pit oven); "egg from crocodile when he lay, throw sand."

♂ ngeke wunpan - "chin from crocodile" (kw 1).

♀ ma'a wunpan - "claw from crocodile" (kw 1).

♂ mutu ngaka kumpinh - "puppy when he waggle tail... from crocodile when he swims" (kw 1).

♂ thayma (kw 6).

7. Personal names:

♀ muk kanke (NP) (kw 5)

♂ a'etha (NP) (kw 1)

♂ agu manga thana (NP) (kw 1) - the crocodile floats in the water and (we) see shadow" (manga - shadow, than- - vb.

stand; the meaning of the name was further explicated in the following terms: The freshwater crocodile floats differently from the saltwater crocodile which lies flat in the water. The freshwater crocodile lies with its head flat in the water but the body hangs down. It appears as a bent, or largely vertical, shadow in the water.)

o
+ meelyo - name given from named location; name alternatively translated as coming from crocodile: "When crocodile frightened by somebody and it ducks away" (meel - duck away).

8. Awu: No details of awu located in this estate. However, the awu for the Freshwater crocodile (kw 1) is found in another estate (BU1); the awu of the "milky pine" (kw 2) is also found in another inland estate; the awu for minha thuchi thayma again falls within estate BU1.

Notes: My major informant for this group - and a member of it - commented: "We should have saltwater crocodile too because they (i.e., both the freshwater and the saltwater species) had a fight before."

1. Code: KU10; "Bluetongue lizard" (cf. McConnel's local groups XIX and XXI).

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Upper Kendall River.

Sites: kuujuru - "big place"; yongka thulum.

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minha wali - "blue-tongue lizard"

   (2) mayi maanyi - "water-lily"

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

   wali-awu - "blue-tongue"; located at agu koothiya.

   maanyi-awu - "water-lily"; located at agu koothiya.

   thaanychil-awu/agu yuku tha'-awu - "milky tree story".

1. Code: KU11; "Bloodwood". (cf. McConnel's local group XV).
   The only information available is a dog name, viz., ♂ kampu pache - "bloodwood flower"), and a personal name, viz., paych punta - "bloodwood flower" (yuku puntu). Language: Wik-Iiyanh.
   Kam waya: (1) yuku kampu; (2) yuku puntu.

1. Code: KU12; kugu-poykol ("Freshwater catfish").

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Upper Kendall River: located on main river.

4. Language: Ay.path.

5. Kam waya:

(1) nga'a poykola - freshwater catfish.

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

agu poykol-awu; inland from yapi-awu and wayn-gan.

Notes: Now defunct.

ZONE T : "Thuuk River"

1. Code: T1; kugu-thinhthaw ("Freshwater snake").

2. Linked group(s); X7.

3. Location: Located on the coast north of the "Thuuk River".

4. Linguistic affiliation: Muminh (?)

5. Kam waya:
   (1) minha thinhthaw - "freshwater snake" (Liasis fuscus)
   (2) ngaka yee (yee - current, flowing water)
   (3) mayi kumba (Mu) - "black fruit: (Ficus sp.)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

Notes: Now defunct.

1. Code: TU1

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Upper "Thuuk River", east of ongorom

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

This group is now defunct. There is general agreement that corporation T2 are the major claimants for the land, giving it control of the whole "Thuuk River" system. Details of kam waya etc. are hard to obtain. There is a suggestion that one kam waya may have been small black ants on the basis of a woman's "big name", meenychom.

1. Code: T2; kugu-uthu ("Dead body"); also known as kugu-muchuwa (Uw. muchuwa - "devil", spirit of newly deceased), kugu-nyinycham (Uw. nyinycham - "devil"), etc.

2. Linked group(s): HU1.

3. Location: A large estate situated on lower "Thuuk River system". Known by two sites located within the estate: thugu (- snake) which gives its name to the river; and pu'an - a major site with permanent well water located on coastal dunes at the south of the estate. From the former the people belonging to this estate are known as pama agu thugu wakanh, "the people who run about thugu"; from the latter, people are referred to as pama agu pu'an wakanh, "people who run about pu'an".

On environmental grounds, people from this estate are known as (Mu) agu manu pengke wakanh.

Major site: pu'an (NP)

Other sites include: anbada
winychin(am)-umu
kupan ngulu

pidhala

mongkom-awu

penhdho

ongorom (C-T1)

kutham-awu

(Mu) yenge/(Uw) yengye

pangidha

muthi

thokey

4. Language: Kugu-Uwanh.

5. Kam waya: (Uw. kem waya)

(1) kompo - "devil"

(2) minha manu wunpan - "scrub turkey" (Megapodius freycinet)

(3) minha thukan - "scrub turkey, brown one" (Alectura lathami)

(4) wang(g)ayj - "file snake" (Acrocordus javanicus)

(5) mayi munyim - "bush onion"

(6) waba - "green frog"

(7) mayi winggu - "arrowroot" (Tacca pinnatifida)

(8) mayi kungpa - "little round hairy yam" (Dioscorea sativa)

(9) mayi kangga - "wild grape"

(10) monke - "bandicoot" (Isoodon macrurus?)

When listing these items my informant (PW) noted that other members of the corporation belonging to a different lineage had a fish species ("jewfish") as kem waya which she did not share with them. On a separate occasion she listed the following additional item:

(11) minha kimpu - "jackass"

A member of the other lineage referred to gave his principal kem waya in the following order:

(a) kuunku - "scrub turkey" (Alectura lathami)

(b) umbe, waaying (Mum) - "jewfish"

(c) munyam, ichare (Mu, Mum) - "onion" (Typhonium brownii)

(d) kugu nyinycham - "ghost" (WM. oony, Uw. kompo)

6. Dog names:

♂ kuya dhiin - "when bush turkey throwing all leaves and sand" (JNg); var. kwuya thiin (kw 2,3)

One man (JNg) made the following interesting comment to me:

> I had a white dog; he was a good hunting dog, so I called him kwuya thiin, because with him I could "load up" with game. That name came from the old people. You can't say kalalo [kal- - vb. carry]. That word is alright; but it is no good as a name. That dog name is good to pronounce.

♂ mukpin - "blue kingfisher" (YNg); "bird singing out in scrub... like willy-wagtail, but yellow; cousin to canary. Mongkom men gave name." (MGW)

♂ thukan kugu - "minha thukan calling out" (PA) (kw 3)

o+ thumu thuka - "little birds with big blue eyes" (JNg); "mate to night owl, long feathers in tail; only comes out at night; live in hollow logs... black and white eyes like owl" (YNg).

o+ woyjengon - "pushing nest", i.e., raking up leaves (PA) (kw 2,3).

kiiwula - fish; "grunter".

7. Personal names:

The names are said to come from the mongkom men.

♂ ngalam-bugam (NP) - yuku ngala - tree, described as "just like yuku woyedho", a Casuarina sp., bugam - new, young, immature.

♂ wanycham (NP) - "from dead body... that's for everybody, for full family" (kw 1)

♂ wobe - name derives from a site called agu wobe located within T2. A man by that name used to stay in a cave at that site. The man and the place are intimately linked together.

♂ minha badha (NM) - "turkey egg, white inside" (kw 2,3).

♂ keenge

♂ ngalameta (NM) - Uncertainty surrounds the meaning of this name. It was suggested that it could be related to yuku ngala (see ngalam-bugam, above); or linked with agu meta - clear water.

o warpa

o chuuchi (NM)

o thapa(n) echinam (NP) (thapa - fork) - "fork standing up when devil he come and land on fork and do shake-a-leg or something" (PA).

o omberamp

o yipa

♀ manu thukan (pw 2).

o panyimpan (NM)

♂ pama thupi (NP) - "dead man's belly" (pama - man, thupi - stomach, belly, intestines). (kw 1).

o aya kominan - "named after file-leaf tree; means two trees stand together" (derived from mayi kom, Ficus opposita).

8. Awu:

(1) manu wunpan-awu - scrub turkey; at anbada (kw 2).

(2) thukan-awu - scrub hen; at anbada (kw 3).

(3) munyim-awu - "bush onion"; at anbada (kw 5)

(4) kungpa-awu - "hairy yam"; at anbada (kw 8)

(5) kangga-awu - "wild grape"; at anbada (agu panych) (kw 9)

(6) monke-awu - "bandicoot"; at anbada (kw 10)

(7) thempe-awu - "black duck"; at anbada

(8) mayi kaych -awu - young waterlily roots; at anbada.

(9) mongkom-awu - site where mongkom men left tree (no associated "increase" activities"

(10) winychin(am)-umu - "winychinam story".

(11) kutham-awu - "mullet story"

(12) patan-awu (Mu. patan - "freshwater shark") - located close to kutham-awu (which marks limit of dry season salt water penetration inland)

(13) matpi-awu - "sleepy fish"; hole in salt pan, within 10 m. of kutham-awu (see above).

(14) thap yongk - "ironwood fork", left by kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers at madhekan.

Notes: Cremation centres (agu thumu munhth) located at the following sites:

pu'an

anbada

mak(a)anban

pathe

ZONE H : "Holroyd River".

1. Code: H1; kugu-nga'a ("Stingray").

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: On the coast on the north bank of the "Holroyd River".

   Sites: kuntuman

   me'a-awu

   kuladha

   ku'a-wun.n

   agu yee'-l-wun.n

4. Language: Kugu-Ugbanh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) nga'a wanggin (Uw) - "long-tailed stingray"

   (2) mayi mugam (Uw) - "long hairy yam"

   (3) minha kaha-yuwa - "white ibis"

   (4) wela niku - "big baler shell"

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

   ♂ mayi manyim (NP) - "from mayi mugam, when they take the skin out" (kw 2)

   ♀ wumpu - "from nga'a wanggin ... when they take the gall off the liver" (The liver of stingrays is eaten raw in the "Holroyd" region) (kw 1).

   yangkam (NM) - "from mayi mugam ... small part of yam before it curls under" (yangk - lower leg) (kw 2).

   mayi ma'a pugam (kw 2).

8. Awu:

me'a-awu - "mosquito place" (left by mongkom men).

wela niku - has awu, out in the ocean from me'a-awu (at kuladha). The two mongkom men left islands and large sandbanks off the coast. The islands have now been washed away (kw 4).

kodhe-awu (kodhe - possibly Northern fantail, Myiagra cyanoleuca) - located at kuntuman. Derives from mongkom story; the two mongkom men sang a song there about minha kodhe, "willy-wagtail".

"lightning story"/"cyclone story" - located at kuladha.

1. Code: H2; kugu-thu'a

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: Lower "Holroyd River", south bank.

Main sites: agu aye (NP)

thaha-kungadha (NP)

Other sites: wanhara (yongk-awu)

thanggu

ngambanhin

thaha-nguge

4. Language: Kugu-Ugbanh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha yewo (Iy) - "whale"; "whalefish with smoke on head".

(2) minha wadha (Iy) - "crow"

(3) waka wuthu (Iy) - "grass seed" (ripens after wet).

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:

yongk-awu - "ironwood" (woomera tree left by kaha-(k)ungk.n brothers)

wanam-awu - wanam ceremonial ground.

Notes: Now defunct.

1. Code: H3; kugu-poole ("Carpet snake")

2. Linked group(s): -----

3. Location: On the coast just south of mouth of "Holroyd River". No major site; "company" with X4. Referred to as pama agu matpi yipipi wakanh, 'sand-ridge people'.

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha poole - "carpet snake"

(2) minha kukun-ngu - "little bird" (minha uba - Bar-shouldered dove, Geopelia h. humeralis).

(3) yuk pindi - "small lizard"

(4) minha pawra - fish sp.

(5) minha kaha-miji - "sea turtle"

These items were nominated by a member of the group (DH). The following item was listed by a man from X5:

(6) minha kuuluwan - Diamond dove (Geopelia cuneata)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

♂ kukun-nga (kw 3)

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: H4; kugu-keka "Spearhandle").

2. Linked group(s): KN3; also estate located between Knox Creek and Kirke River. (A member of this estate, MNg, says that jelly-fish (kw 7) is the same as for KN3; however, the latter has different "little stories".)

3. Location: On the coast just south of the "Holroyd River" mouth.

Main site: thampenych (pama agu thampenych wakanh)

kiban

Other sites: ka'adha

yekong (C-X3)

pukam

impa

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) "flat-tailed stingaree" (yumela, Yi'anh)

(2) "spear" (okony - "spear handle", Hibiscus tileaceus).

(3) "lancewood"

(4) "saltwater"

(5) "tide"

(6) "whistle wind"

(7) "jelly fish"

6. Dog names:

pelempinh (Mum. pele - knot holes, budding twigs, umpinh - to dig, cut) - "smoothing of the twigs growing from the hibiscus spear-handle" (Mu. thata umpinh) (kw 2).

thaha-apanh (Mum) - "dig out end of spear", i.e., the end where the prongs are inserted (kw 2).

yeth-umpinh (Mum) - "the cross shark cuts the fish in half".

7. Personal names:

♀ thupi yomel - "body of stingray" (ku 1).

♀ ngaka kum.n mento - "after sea rough, then fine" (kw 4).

♂? ngaka puugam - "could be new tide, new tide coming in" (kw 4); or "sea fine".

8. Awu:

thampenych - "jelly-fish story"; jelly-fish created by digging new wells.

1. Code: H5; kugu-yome ("Possum").

2. Linked group(s): X1,4,5,6.

3. Location: Coast south of "Holroyd River".

   Sites: pabim

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh.

5. Kam waya:

   See X1,4,5,6.

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

   ♂ pungku pinba (from Rainbow lorikeet, minha pinba)

8. Awu:

   mayi winggu-awu - "arrowroot"; located at pabim.

1. Code: H6; kugu-minha ("Diver").

   Some doubts as to whether this constitutes a discrete group separate from X2 (q.v.).

   Now defunct.

1. Code: H7; kugu-toho-toh ("Barramundi") (var. kugu-waychin).

   Few details available; cf. linked groups B1, KS5. Shares awu, minha thuchi kanggun (dotterel), with X2.

1. Code: H8; kugu-kujin ("Freshwater shark").

2. Linked group(s): X8.

3. Location: Located in an intermediate position between coast and inland, south of the "Holroyd River".

   Sites: ma'a-poon
   puchungan
   agu konyjen, etc.

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh.

5. Kam waya:

   (1) minha kujin - "freshwater shark".

   (2) kampanya - "swordfish" (sawfish).

   (3) minha thowo - "storm bird"

   (4) minha ngathalje - Spangled drongo (Dicrurus hottentotus bracteatus); assigned as kam waya by man from X5, on basis of its resemblance to kw 3.

   (5) minha kaha-je - egret (Egretta spp.)

   (?) (6) minha engk-l-piya - White-necked heron (Ardea pacifica)

   (7) minha kopo - "small black crane"

6. Dog names:

   ♂ kaha-je kugu - "call of minha kaha-je" (kw 5); "calls trr, trr, trr."

   kaha-je thaku - "small egret"

7. Personal names:

   ♂ mayi kempa (NP

   ♂ nga'a murgan (NM) - "shark liver" (kw 1).

8. Awu:

minha ngugu (various owl species, including Ninox rufa and N. novaeseelandiae); located at agu konyjen (no. 2) (C-HU1).

1. Code: H9; kugu-minha ("Diver").

Very few details known about this group which is now defunct. Linked closely (perhaps in terms of dual ownership) with X2. Language: Kugu-Mangk. Located north of the "Holroyd" on or near the coast. "Company" with H1 and T2 on sand-ridge system running south from kap.

1. Code: HU1; wik-uthu ("Dead body").

2. Linked group(s): T2; BU1.

3. Location: On the northern bank of the "Holroyd" upstream from thupi-ijiy (C).

Other sites: thumba-awu
ulman
kuna waya
oygo

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh.

5. Kam waya:

(1) pama uthu - "dead body" (specified as "main story")

(2) minha monte - jabiru

(3) mimpa - "clothes", "bush blanket": the reference is undoubtedly to the bark which is used to wrap up the mummified body.

(4) minha konkon - "jackass, kookaburra"

(5) minh punba - "file snake"

(6) (minha) thugu ngamba - black, white-bellied, swamp snake

(7) mayi payan - "mate to waterlily"

(8) yuku thata - frog (generic term)

(9) minha thuchi yidu - "kingfisher"

(10) minh manu wunpan - "black scrub turkey"

(11) minh thukan - "brown turkey"

(12) yuku payan - tree sp.

6. Dog names:

♂ ku'a yilun - "from dead body when fat, grease, coming out" (yi'i - fat) (kw 1).

♀ payan payche - "white waterlily flower" (payan - waterlily (white), payche - flower) (kw 7).

♂ konkon - "laughing jackass" (Dacelo leachii) (kw 4).

tukan - "brown scrub turkey" (kw 11).

7. Personal names:

♂ yentamba (NP) - "jabiru when he spears fish" (kw 2).

♂ mimpa puugam (NP) (puugam, new) (kw 3).

♂ mimpanji (NP) (kw 3).

♀ thali (NM) - "watersnake" (kw 5).

♀ iinyjin - "yam's leaf going yellow, getting ready to dig up" (WM. pol payana; Mu. iya pinyjan).

8. Awu:

thumba-awu (thumba - "garfish") - "garfish story".

migu-awung (migu - "catfish") - "catfish story".

punba-awu (punba - "file snake") (cf. kw 5).

thugu ngamba-awu - "black, swamp snake" (cf. kw 6).

payan-awu (payan - "mate to waterlily") (cf. kw 7).

wongbe-awu (wongbe , rhinoceros beetle) - located at thopenenh.

kuna(nga) waya: kuna - excrement, waya - bad, i.e., diarrhoea (classified as awu, but regarded as having a different status from the other awu listed above).

Notes: There are two awu at thupiji which are regarded as "company" awu, viz., marech-awu, "girlfriend" (Mu. pand-awu) and thata-awu, "frog" (cf. kw 8).

ZONE X : "Christmas Creek".

1. Code: X1; kugu-yome ("Possum").

2. Linked group(s): X4,5,6; H5.

3. Location: North of "Christmas Creek"; described as "inside between muth-awula and yangku".

Principal sites: piching (NP)
mutha-awula (ceremonial centre, munka)
thugu

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha yome - "possum" (Trichosurus vulpecula)

(2) minha pinba - "squeaker" (Trichoglossus haemotodus septentrionalis)

(3) monto/kulam - road, track; "possum where he makes road".

These three items were listed as the principal kam waya by a member of this group. The following were given on other occasions either by him or by other members of the estate:

(4) yuku wongbe - rhinoceros beetle

(5) nga'a malidha

(6) nga'a kulang - "King fish" (Alligator gar)

6. Dog names:

♂ umu thupan, "curry"; yellow patch on chest (kw 1)

o waamanh, "possum climbing up tree" (kw 1)
+

7. Personal names:

♂ pungkundu (NP (= Iy. pungku kunych.n) (kw 1)

♂ minha tha'u pipi (tha'u - foot, pipi - mud) (NM) "when possum swim make road up and down; get muddy." (kw1)

komben (kw4)

8. Awu:

muth-awula : monka-awu - ceremonial centre of munka.

kaha-ngungku (-awu) - "cold sick".

1. Code: X2; kugu-minha ("Diver") (kw 4)

2. Linked group(s): KN4,5; H6,9.

3. Location: On the coast north of "Christmas Creek".

Principal site(s): yangku (PN)
yewonen
ngamba
kurka pelen (C-X4)
piching (C-X1)
pilu

4. Language: Kugu-Yi'anh. Most informants including one old female member of the group, state that Kugu-Yi'anh is the same as Kugu-Mangk. However, the senior male member of the group asserted that Kugu-Yi'anh is different. He nominated Kugu-Mangk as the language of B1.

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha ko'an/minha nguyumba - "geese, geese egg"
(Magpie goose, Anseranas semipalmata)

(2) minha thampe - "iron duck" (Anas s. superciliosa)

(3) minha koonu - "Burdekin duck" (Tadorna radjah rufitergum)

(4) panhthiyan - "diver" (Anhinga melanogaster rufa)

(5) umele - "diver"

(6) nguma - "diver"

(7) ngache thugu - "red-bellied black snake"

(8) kapi/peengan - "moon"

(9) ngache thuthuwa - "death adder" (Acanthopis antarcticus)

(10) thumu pupi - "firestick"

(11) aag eka - "heaps of shell on beach"

(12) ngaka uthi - "freshwater mussel"

(13) minha yapi - "pee wee" (Grallina cyanoleuca)

6. Dog names:

7. Personal names:

♂ pungku ko'an (pungk - knee, lump) - bump on goose's head (kw 1)

♀ minha yimba - "diver when he laughs" (kw 4)

♀ minha manu (manu - throat, neck) - "throat of diver moves" (kw 4)

♀ manu katha (katha - old, smelly) (kw 4)

8. Awu:

Major ceremonial centre at yangku; see kunalum/anychalam ceremony (Ch. 10).

1. Code: X3; kugu-pooli ("Carpet snake").

2. Linked group(s): H3.

3. Location: North of "Christmas Creek".
   Principal site(s): yangku (C-X2)

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh.

5. Kam waya:
   (1) minha pooli - "carpet snake" (Morelia spilotes).
   (2) minha kaha-miji - "sea turtle" (all species).
   See also H3.

6. Awu: -----

7. Dog names: -----

8. Personal names: -----

Notes: No living members. The last surviving member was M to the senior male of X2. He stated that his MM came from the same group and "married full family ... like crocodile." This means that his F, MF, MM and M all came from yangku.

1. Code: X4; kugu-yome ("Possum")

2. Linked group(s): Described as "full story, one language" with X5; also X1,6; H5.

3. Location: North of "Christmas Creek"; north along the coast from waalang

   Principal site(s): memola (C-X5)

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh

5. Kam waya:

   See X5,6.

6. Dog names:

   ♂ yuk upun waalang (yuk upun - "milk tree", Excoecaria agallocha): from a tree stump in the mouth of the river at waalang. People say that it can sometimes be observed moving about at night. No strangers are allowed to approach it, otherwise they will fall ill. There is a song about the tree: A man standing on the north bank thought it was a person and made a song about his mistake. (May relate to the "diver story".)

   ♂ thayje waalang: "sea break" at waalang.

7. Personal names:

   ♂ tha'u nhaanyi (NP): tha'u - foot, nhaanyi - sand; "possum walk about, leave track in sand before climbs up tree" (kw 1).

   ♂ walule (NP): walu - cheek: "possum's head" (kw 1).

   ♂ aynycha tha'u kuuwa (NP): aynycha - hole, tha'u - foot: "from beetle digging hole" (kw 1).

   ♂ peR.t (NM) (See X5).

   ♀ tha'u-majin (See X5; also thaha-majin)

   ♀ wucha kiga (NP (See X5).

   ♀ minha tha'u (NP (See X5).

1. Code: X5; kugu-yome/kugu-chaawana (See also X6).

2. Linked group(s): X1,4,6; H5.

3. Location: "Christmas Creek", north of the mouth.

Principal site(s): 1. waalang (wenko kungkem)

(wenko - bank, side, kungke - north) (NP)

Other sites:
2. ku'a-l-wun.n
3. kukanga
4. yawu(ng) (TM)
5. kupu
6. memola (C-X4)
7. kuthana (C-X4)
8. thant.na: (a) thantena putham (W)
(b) thantena koyigam (W) (C-X8)
9. windidha
10. impa (TM)
11. kunamnga
12. wunhthoj (W)
13. yinung (W) (AM-Y)
14. kaha-pepen (W) (AM)
15. empa
16. kurka pelen (P) (AM) (AKi) (C-X2)
17. thatu
18. minha ngakanga: "brolgas coming in for water"
19. ku'a wun.n: "dog lying down asleep"
20. pinta/ngaka pukam (P) (AM) (FC)
21. puuny (pala kuwa, "bottom side") (cf. 28); puuny-aw (P) (R) (S)
22. agu panych (P) (Po) (AM)

23. wankwe
24. muthanda
25. konhdhe (P) (FC)
26. mangkara
27. pepen (P) (FC) (S)
28. puunyu (pak kani, "on top, inside") (cf. 21)/puuny-awu
29. unma
30. kuja tha'u (kuja - "kangaroo") (C) (A?)
31. thacha poye(ngo) (thacha - goanna; poy- - vb. run) (C) (A)
32. ponych pukam (P)
33. pacha matpana
34. manycha (P) (S) (K) (var. agu manu umu)
35. pempela (C-X7)
36. inyenge (W) (AM) (C-X8)
37. thitha punhtha
38. mayin-ngu
39. thanhthula (riverside)
40. ngaka wi'i'am (riverside)
41. nga'a-awu-nga (A) (riverside)/waalang

4. Language: Kugu Mu'inh

5. Kam waya:

(1) yome - "possum, brown"

(2) pinba - "squeaker" (Trichoglossus haemotodus septentrionalis)

(3) yuku ngada - spider (generic)

(4) thochon - jardine (also called nga'a engka) (Scleropages l. leichhardti)

(5) maykun - rifle-fish (Toxotes chatareus)

(6) poykolo - catfish (long pointy nose; freshwater)

(7) wongbo - beetle (rhinoceros beetle)

(8) yuk thochon - tree (used for making coolamon) (cf. 4)

(For a fuller list, see X6. The same informant was involved in compiling both lists of kam waya, presenting this list himself during one interview, and participating with another informant in preparing the list presented under X6. The items not included here but which appear on the other list were all volunteered by this informant at various times. This list has been presented so that it may be compared with the other list with respect to ordering. The other informant gave the first five items without prompting or other assistance.

In addition, we can add a further kam waya which does not appear under X6:

(21) yuk yome, unidentified tree sp. found in vine forest (cf. kw 1)

6. Dog names:

♂ thayje ku'a-l-wunn - "sea break" at ku'a-l-wun.n, small inlet or creek just north of waalang.

♂ nga'awu - "from salmon story".

o+ wayche yee - "from dilly-bag".

♂ waga unggu (waga - Eucalyptus papuana, unggu - long, tall): from a tall gum tree which marks an important junction on "Christmas Creek".

7. Personal names:

♂ minha untu (NP) (untu - testicles) (kw 1).

♂ agu wuk rampe (NP) - "beetle digs hole" (kw 7)

♂ peR.t (NM) (see, also, X4) (Probably corruption of 'parrot' (kw 1). Name derives from "old fellow from Mitchell; has name peR.t too". cf. Sharp; linked with what is possibly his "clan I-6 ... Possum" (1937: 340; see also his map, p. 267.)

o
+ thaha-majin (NP) (thaha - mouth, maji - hungry, thirsty) (said to derive from kw 1; although it may also be linked with estate T2, regarded as "thirsty country" during the late dry season; the name is also given as tha'u majin (tha'u - foot) which can be translated as "track left by the possum going up and down for water (kw 1).

o
+ tha'u-majin (NP (see thaha-majin, above).

o
+ wucha kiga (NP - "possum track in tree, travelling up and down (signs of scratches, faeces)" (kw 1).

o
+ minha tha'u (NP) (tha'u - foot) - "possum's foot"; track left by possum (kw 1).

8. Awu:

weycha-awu (waychi-awu): weycha - dilly bag; located at waalang at the bottom of the river, extending from the mouth to nga'a-'awu. If a stranger attempts to swim the river, a whirlpool will "come from that story (cf. the similar association of whirlpool with dilly bag on the Archer River, McConnel's local group III).

nga'a-awu: two awu - (a) nga'a pawe - "saltwater catfish;
(b) nga'a anycha-(thu)pan - "salmon" (Leptobrama muelleri)

Located upstream from waalang in the bank of the river. Classified as mukam.

punga-awu: punga - sun; located at ku'a-l-wun.n

nga'a wayting-awu/nga'a woychen-awu (nga'a wayting/woychen - barramundi): located on the saltpan near the "water crossing" at pacha matpana. Classified as mukam.

mayi yampim-awu: mayi yampim (equivalent to mayi muchim) - yam; location unrecorded.

1. Code: X6; kugu yome/kugu chaawana ("Possum").

Kugu yome is a term of self-identification (or "big name", nhamp a'e); kugu chaawana is a term used by outsiders (or "small name", nhamp mangaya). It derives from the possum's call, variously described as cháa, or chöwáa.

2. Linked group(s): X1,4,5; H5.

3. Location: At the mouth of "Christmas Creek", on the south bank.

Principal site: waalang (wenk yibem) (wenk - bank, side, yibe - south)

Other sites: thangkadha

poompo

waying

pipi mini

mudhan

wenka winggu

wudu

wakaynyjan

kek thu'ula

wu'udha

manu pachinga

4. Language: Kugu-Mu'inh

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha yome - "possum"

(2) minha penyjon - prob. Brush cuckoo (Cuculus v. variolus)

(3) windi - "stingray"

(4) margala - "stingray"

(5) nga'a kulang - "king fish"

(6) minha pinba - "squeaker" (Trichoglossus haemotodus)

(7) minha thuchi mayanga - prob. Varied lorikeet (Psitteuteles versicolor)

(8) minha thuchi maychigam - prob. Red-winged parrot (Aprosmictus erythropterus)

(9) nga'a poykolo

(10) nga'a engka - "jardine" (Scleropages l. leichhardti)

(11) nga'a lutu

(12) yuku windi

(13) yuk wongwo - rhinoceros beetle

(14) yuku thochon (cf. kw 10, also known as nga'a thochon) unidentified tree sp. burnt to produce charcoal which is rubbed on corpses.

(15) ngache upun - long-tailed eel (Evenchelys macrurus)

(16) untu - scrotum, testes (derived from kw 1)

(17) tha'u - foot, paw (derived from kw 1)

(18) agu - ground (derived from kw 13)

(19) nga'a maykun - "rifle-fish" (Toxotes chatareus)

(20) yuku ngada - spider (generic)

6. Dog names:

♂ muchuchan - "possum sits head down in hole in tree" (kw 1).

♂ kach uganh - "possum track up and down tree" (kw 1).

♂ muninh - "possum hair when we twist (ready for dance)" (kw 1).

♂ thayje waalang - "sea break at waalang".

♂ walu yi'i - "corner of waalang" (on the south bank).

7. Personal names:

♂ minha kiga puugam (NP) - "new track in tree" (kw 1).

Note: The one member of this group claimed that he had no "small name"; and he had only this one "big name". Other people frequently abbreviated it to simply minha kiga.

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: X7; kugu-thinthaw/kugu-wube (Mu) ("Watersnake")

2. Linked group(s): ED2; T1.

3. Location: "Christmas Creek";

Sites: kunalu (on river) (C)
thochon (on river) (C)
pambe wu'udha (ridge/swamp) (C)
wak kanyjan (swamp) (C)
thaynychun (crossing, river side) (C)
thankanyjin (river side) (K)
empay wakanh (fishing spot, river) (C-X5)
pempela (C-X5) (— X8)

4. Language: described as "like Kugu-Mangk" (ke'a kugu mangk)

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha thinhthaw - "watersnake" (Liasis fuscus)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

o
+ kargo (NP)

8. Awu: -----

Notes: Defunct; last surviving member was MM to senior men of X1.

1. Code: X8; kugu-kujin ("Freshwater shark")

2. Linked group(s): H8

3. Location: "Christmas Creek".

Principal sites: pinhdha mechom - "black ant heads"
wuyinh (river side)
inyenge (C-X5)

4. Language: Kugu-Muminh

5. Kam waya:

(1) nga'a kujin - freshwater shark (See H8).

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

Notes: Defunct; last surviving member was MF to man in senior generation of X1.

1. Code: XU1; kugu-atu ("Sugarbag")

2. Linked group(s): KS3.

3. Location: large territory located on middle section of "Christmas Creek", upstream from pepen.
Principal sites: thacha poye(ngo) (C)
michere
koon inychane; and further inland

4. Language: Wik-Iiyanh

5. Kam waya:
(1) atu - "sugarbag", native honey (Trigona sp.)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

Notes: Possibly the same as McConnel's local group XXU (1930: 205).

1. Code: XU2 ("Curlew")

2. Linked group(s): KU2

3. General location: A large territory on the upper "Christmas Creek" ("Christmas Creek on top") below its junction with the South Kendall River.

4. Linguistic affiliation: Pakanh.

5. Kam waya:
   (1) Crow (Corvus orru salvatorii)
   (2) prob. Southern stone curlew (Burhinus magnirostris ramsayi)
   (3) Magpie lark (Grallina cyanoleuca)

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu:
   agu wayn-gan ngan-nga, agu wayn-gan (Bk) - "curlew"; the crow awu is also associated with this awu. The two awu arise from a fight between "Curlew" and "Crow" over a firestick.
   yapi-awu (Mu), agu yapi ngan-nga (Bk) - magpie lark.

Notes: The data on kam waya are somewhat tentative. I have not made any personal contact with members of this estate. Kam waya were assigned by informants on the basis of awu (Bk. agu ngan-nga) located within the estate.

ZONE B : "Breakfast Creek"

1. Code: B1; kugu-toho-toh ("Barramundi")

2. Linked group(s): KS5; H10.

3. Location: Linked with thiji, or wa'awa thiji - "Breakfast Creek": from pangkadha at the mouth of "Breakfast Creek" south along the coast to the mouth of Moonkan Creek, extending inland to about maalun. Classified as pama agu thiji wakanh, 'people who "run about" thiji', or pama agu pinychi wanta, "people from the flat country left by saltwater crocodile".

   Sites: pangkadha
   thatanga
   pimpadha
   ku'a punhthu(ngu)
   tha'u ngukara: site where ma'a-akam "finishes off". Referred to as awu but not in association with any particular item.
   yan.nga
   maalun

4. Language: Kugu-Mangk

5. Kam waya: See KS5; not elicited separately.

6. Dog names: -----

7. Personal names:

   ♂ nga'a margin (margin - fat) - "barramundi fat". The name was said to refer to a layer of fat located just above

the heart of the barramundi; melted down by heating in a baler shell.

o+ nga'a elpen - "barramundi meat".

o+ mangkarana thanan - "barramundi standing up right at mouth of river or junction".

o+ mangk-(th)anan (see above)

o+ (nga'a) nguchu - "file stingray skin; when it cooks, the skin begins to peel off".

o+ pama (p)inhdha unggan - "man breaks head off barramundi, because can't cook fish with head on".

(N.B. These names were all given by a man from the linked corporation KS5).

8. Awu: -----

1. Code: BU1 : kugu-monte/kugu-uthu ("Jabiru talk/Dead body talk")

2. Linked group(s): T2; HU1.

3. General location: A large territory extending from Strathgordon down the Edward River on the north side (wenk kungkem); bounded in the north by the upper reaches of "Christmas Creek". Described as pama kaninga, "on top people".

Major campsite(s): nhandu-ijiy mimponyje (nhandu - "scrub"; -ijiy - big)

4. Language: Properly speaking, said to be Wik-Iiyanh or Pakanh

(½ Iiyanh/ ½ Pakanh). Present members of the group are said to speak a "muddle-up language, half-Mu'inh, half-Olkol".

5. Kam waya:

(1) minha monte (Mu) - "policeman bird, jabiru" (See Linked groups)

6. Dog names: said to be "all in one" with those of groups T2, HU1.

7. Personal names: -----

8. Awu: -----

Holroyd : Run 2 - Kendall River

1	ngulu kumbaninh
2	punhtha kumbaninh
3A	ngulu puntum
3B	punhtha puntum
4	umu kunten
5	ngaka kaychin
6	kuchund-eypanh
8	nhacham-awu
9	kuthum-awu
10	awu-ko'on
11	puya-awu
12	wadha punhthanga
13	munulun
14	yomelo-awu
15	tal-tal-awu
16	kenhdhe
17	empadha
18	kuli-aynychan
19	koye
20	yechidha
21	yechidha
22	itha thaha-ngululu
23	kengbe
24	ngaka muthunum
25	wet.n (Dish Yard)
26	thanmul
27	punhtha pi'ek
28	yankendanen
29	yankendanen
30	kucheneembel
31	ngotele(ng)
32	yiindiy
33	matheney(nga)
34	pu'anhdha
35	kok
36	pantniyanga/paneya
37	nhampa nhampong
38	engka thaang(am)
39	pambe minyim
40	thipi minim
41	erkon
42	thuthudhama
43	wulunyje pukwe

Holroyd : Run 3 - King River

1	poynyche
2	nhurambin
3	kuntu wukinga
4	adham
5	kapi-awu
6	pangka
7	ngoyidha
8	wu'u wa'ina
9	thucha
10	kempepen-awu
11	ngulu manhthanda
12	ngulu muka
13	wulunyje pukwe
14	ngache yekanda
15	pimpa maaya
16	ngaka puchuchema
17	wadhala
18	kukedhanga
19	kuth
20	thegedhamba
21	a'athan
22	kuchira
23	toho-toh-awu
24	pi'am
25	paychen
26	konyjen
27	iiy
28	mangk pomponi
29	umu pimpanga
30	thijila
31	milbe
32	minyerin
33	peme
34	wunyinh-awu
35	nga'adha
36	kugbedhe
37	the'enda
38	mangaynyi
39	punhtha wubanga
40	ku'a-aynychi welenyje
41	ku'a-aynychi
42	punhtha-thayji-awu (thoyuw-awu)
43	wupere
44	theke
45	kumudh-awu
46	wembukam
47	mangk pidhala
48	wenkam
49	kuchunda
50	akala unychen
51	mumu koynych.n
52	pathe
53	megala
54	penhdho
55	kokadha
56	kangk
57	thaynych pukam
58	thuulum
59	omom
60	atham
61	kulidha
62	michidha
63	pogowo
64	ngucha-awu
65	manu muka/achamp-awu
66	pundu
67	thuke(y)
68	wube-awu
69	yeyedha
70	mayajin

Holroyd : Run 4 - Thuuk River - Holroyd River

1	megala
2	kupun ngulu
3	winychin(am)-umu
4	pupu
5	agu milen
6	kaynychar-muchi
7	kuthum-awu
8	patan-awu
9	punhtha mongkondo
10	mepeperngga
11	mongkom-awu
12	ngulu patpam
13	ngulu kutpanga
14	kunychan tha'u-kuman
15	pi'aji
16	pambe ma'a bon
17	entere
18	ongorom
19	pingkudung
20	muthani
21	pambe thaha-bunga
22	puchenye
23	kongko
24	pijam
25	pangidha
26	kathungunga
27	kujin-awu (madhekan)
28	ponhthole
29	kutidha
30	thugu
31	okony-konogom .
32	kap
33	puyama
34	wagwe
35	mayadhin
36	pingkinan
37	muti
38	mayi payan-awu
39	ankan-nga
40	muluman
41	mangk-awu (kaychana)
42	pu'an
43	papanga
44	thongkodho
45	kundu thanen
46	kurka kungkem
47	kimpurum
48	ku'a thuulu
49	ngukam-nga
50	me'a-awu
51	kuladha
52	ka'adha
53	yee'-l-wun.n
54	ngambanhin
55	wanhara (yuku yongk-awu)
56	thanggu
57	yeweng
58	nga'a wegamb-awu
59	kobe
60	kobe (patan-awu)
61	thangku panhthanan
62	pipi pugam thanpi
63	mak waya
64	agu kuuyan
65	thuthu punhthana piiya
66	wonhthojo
67	ngayagan
68	kekenhdhan
69	yurgayin
70	minhayin
71	thapadben
72	kumidha umpey
73	thokey
74	thayjam pucha
75	ngumpadha
76	yenyjam-nga
77	pande-awu
78	thupi-ijiy
79	mukukunga
80	thachim
81	mokomngadha
82	paycha kutul-nga
83	yuuya
84	wudbenychinga
85	ngombo
86	kubinha
87	punhtha puyiba
88	yo'altiy
89	koyuwa
90	thumba-awu
91	nhaynycham
92	pontontenga
93	ngolpombin
94	anti(y)
95	punmina
96	punhthanyji
97	yuku piluma
98	wa'a manu
99	yengwe bitho

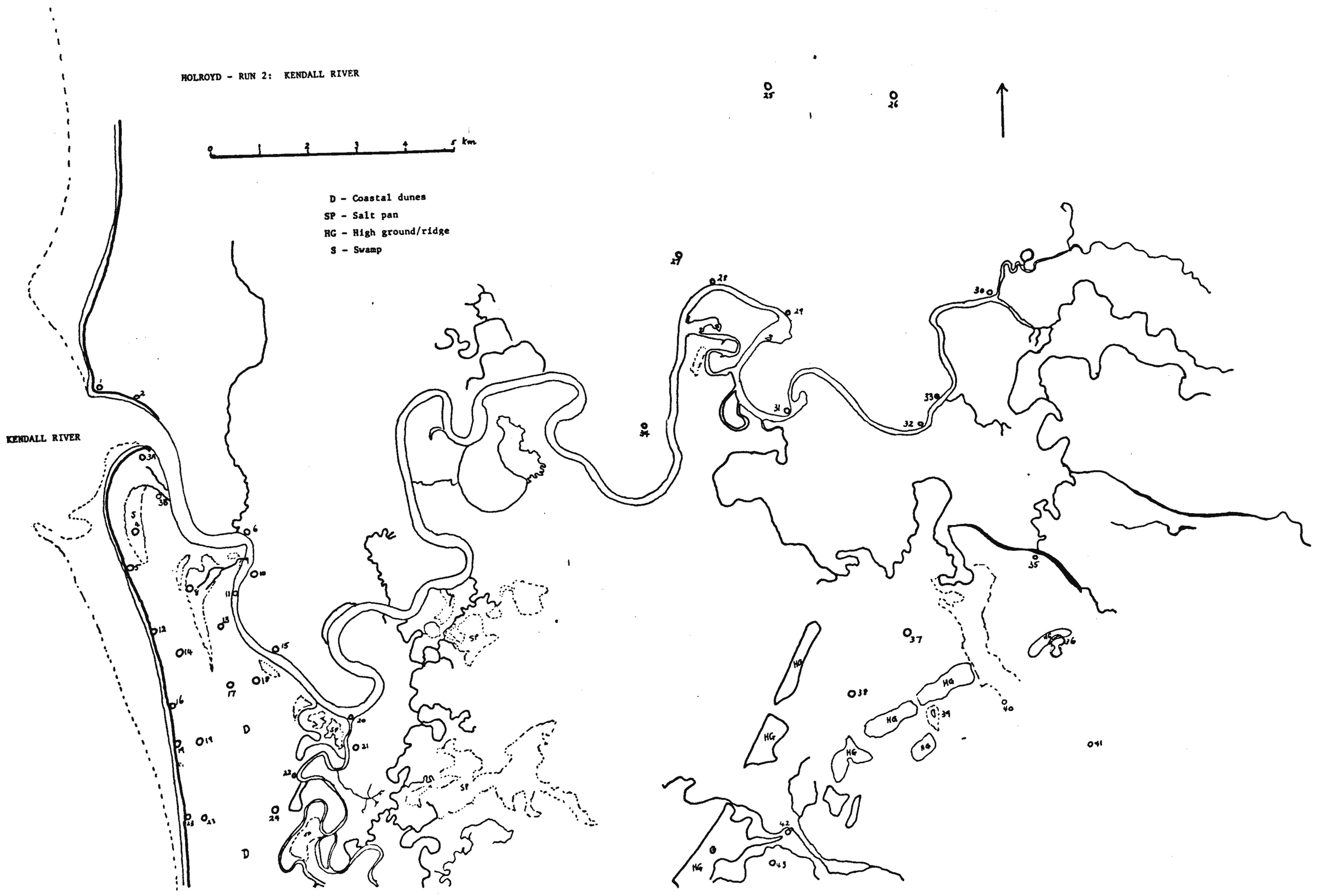
Holroyd : Run 5 - Holroyd River - Agu Konyjen

1	thaha-nguge
2	mucha pukam
3	paycha kutul-nga
4	payncha thupinga
5	parkan
6	pa'ulum/agu wugeyam
7	ku'a wun.n
8	kompolin
9	thapadha
10	thaha-kumban
11	empam
12	yangga
13	wuulingan
14	agu pambe pii'
15	thandu inhthange
16	ma'a poon
17	puchungan
18	mucha umpan
19	kungane
20	thaha-kungadha
21	aye
22	thampenych
23	yengwedhe
24	pithanhdhe
25	monte wutpanga
26	mulun
27	kikunu
28	ponto
29	abung
30	konyjen
31	thabe
32	mukun-nga/punman-nga
33	pantinga
34	kuw riilim
35	kukanen
36	thongkon muduwan
37	pinta
38	agu puunyuwa
39	pambe panyche
40	wankwe
41	muthanda
42	konde
43	mangkara
44	yedhenen
45	pepen
46	unma

Holroyd : Run 6 - Christmas Creek

1	yangku
2	yewonenh
3	kunamnga
4	kigajen
5	inhthaneng
6	yinung
7	kaha-pepen
8	empa
9	kurka pelen
10	thongkon mudhuwan
11	thatu
12	poonyowa
13	minha ngaka-nga
14	ku'a-wun.n
15	ponycha pukam
16	paycha matpana
17	nga'a wachin-awu
18	agu kundu
19	yutung
20	manych
21	impa
22	windidha
23	thant.n.nh
24	kuthan.nh
25	memola
26	punda kupunga
27	yawu
28	kukang
29	ka'a-l-wun.n
30	waalang
31	manu pachinga
32	wa'awa thiji
33	pangkadha
34	waka kanyjan
35	wu'udha
36	polomgin
37	mudhan

HOLROYD - RUN 2: KENDALL RIVER



KING RIVER

D - Coastal dunes
SP - Salt pan
HG - High ground-ridge
S - Swamp

N

HOLROYD - RUN 3: KING RIVER

HOLROYD - RUN 4: THUUK RIVER - HOLROYD RIVER

THUUK RIVER

HOLROYD RIVER

D - Coastal dunes
SP - Salt pan
HG - High ground-ridge
S - Swamp

N

D - Coastal dunes

SP - Salt pans

agu konyjen (thickly-timbered swampy area)

S - Swamp

HG - High ground/ridge

HOLROYD - RUN 5: HOLROYD RIVER - AGU KONYJEN

HOLROYD - RUN 6: CHRISTMAS CREEK